PERFORMING COLLECTIVIZATION:

MOBILE WORK & RESISTANCE

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Abstract

Collectivization in workers has been studied in through the theoretical lens of Labour Process, Post Structuralism but mostly through the Industrial Relations lens with its frames of references, sub-systems of society and the actor 'trade union'. With the declining influence of trade unions, the interests of the workers have been creatively supported by resistance- with or without unions. This study privileges a Performativity lens to the collectivization of employees and the subjectivities by which they resist the normalizing discourses of the organization. It is argued that Workers collective is formed not as a form of reaction to repressive managerial action or as a mere resistance through a set of actions and behaviours, but as struggle for workers to transform meanings.

In order to access this enactment, performed collectivization and resistance as socially constructed concepts, are explored in this thesis with a post structuralist approach. This approach provides the theoretical resources to engage with subjectivity, embodiment and space in the performance of Mobile Workers micro-politics of resistance. The mobile worker has been impacted with the narratives of globalization along with the contradictions of safety, hospitality and efficiency have impelled the operating crew of airlines to recreate meanings as they engage with their environment.

Methodologically from an interpretive theoretical framework, this is attained through the analysis of narrative and drawing of themes from data gathered through observation and unstructured interviews of operating employees of Airlines. The data shows the manipulation of identities, imposition of dominant discourses, militant approach of the employer when faced

with resisting employees and the embodiment of these discursive practices. The study is also directed towards the covert and overt practices of resistance of the employees in the struggle to rediscover meanings in their mobile lived experiences.

The study aids in theory by clarifying spatial and embodied managing of subjectivities in performing collectivization and resistance in mobile working. It contributes to practice by highlighting mobile workers experiences of aeromobility and how it shapes their lived experiences.

Keywords: Resistance, Post-Structural, Collectivization, Performance, Mobile Work

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

"No normal man feels less free because no one obeys his own impulses. Even when they are strongest and their satisfactions positively dangerous, he feels that his actions spring from himself. But there is no man who does not turn against a command imposed on him from outside; in this case everyone speaks of pressure and reserves the right to vengeance or rebellion." Thus Elias Canetti in 'Crowds & Power' (1960,1984) has articulated the human urge to assert the unshackled self especially of the worker, who finds herself beholden not only for her labour but for her very being. The colonizing of her identity by the employer does not go unnoticed by her and is resisted but strangely there is also simultaneous reaffirmation of the colonized identity (Thomas and Davis 2005) considering that organizations hve moved from direct control of unilateral power to the totalizing “panopticon” umbrella of disciplinary power (Foucault 1995) with the progressive spread of internalized ideological control (Foucault 2008). The nature of work and the nature of the worker are both carefully managed (Alvesson, 1996; Knights and Vurdubakis, 1994). However, the 'totalizing' control where the organization aims to control the heart, mind, and bodies of the employees (Schwartz 1987, Gabriel 1999) suppresses all forms of visible dissent and weakens all other workers' affiliations trade unions. However, as no discourse can be entirely totalizing in its scope and meaning, the workers use the ambiguities and splintering of meanings to disarticulate and reinscribe meanings that they identify with through performative acts of 'status actions,' which are more grounded in the worker's experiences and less expressed through large-scale organized worker institutional actions (Crook et al. 1992, Lash and Urry 1987). This disarticulation when the worker deviates

from the norm is a fearful, anxious experience for her but that act is also full of thrill when taken along with fellow workers, thus bringing in new solidarity (Ahmed 2014).

Traditionally, when it comes to worker solidarity, trade unions have been studied extensively to understand worker collectivization structures and processes as the primary vehicle of resistance in the pursuit of justice. Trade unions have an economic purpose and engage in political and power struggles to protect the working classes from the tyrannies of employers as the workers strive towards a classless society (Weber 1968, Engles 1975, Marx 1973). These efforts are on even as workers respond to alleviate their deprived role within the capitalist society (Hyman 1983). There are, nevertheless, conflicting views on whether the trade unions are a relic of the past or institutions awaiting resurgence (Tapia et al. 2015, Hensman 2001, Hyman 1999). There is also a view that collective organizations are 'under siege' on account of employers' active efforts towards dissuading union formations and even derecognizing them an as a result, the worker's ability to engage in collective action is greatly hindered and even obstructed (Kelly 2012, Joseph 2010). However, the worker does not get resigned to this situation but uses creative ways to actively network and resist organizational colonization (Schonboone 2007) through everyday actions of resistance (Prasad and Prasad 1998).

The workers of commercial airlines in India for instance organized as craft-based unions have historically voiced their concerns through collective mobilization, collective action, litigation and strike action at regular intervals to demand justice. , However, since 2010 the 'strategic militant' stance of civil aviation managements led to their unions being derecognized, union

offices being closed, their membership reduced with the influx of contingent workers, , and overt forms of resistance suppressed with punitive ation (Joseph 2010, IPG 2012, ACEU vs. Air India 2011, TOI 2012).

Airlines have strategically created their own modes of action through gendered division of labour and hierarchies (Ashcraft 2005,2007), colonizing of employees through the instrumentality of the 'corporations' frame of organization (Fraher and Gabriel 2016). The accelerated use of management ideas like restructuring, flexibility, downsizing, and culture of the weaponization of customer centrality has permeated even public enterprises (DuGay 1996, Thomas and Davis 2005, Bhowmik 2009). The social space of the aircraft is not just an inanimate spectator but shapes and is shaped by the 'social relations of production (Soja 1989) and the hegemony of management policies and practices. The operating cabin and cockpit crew employees of Indian commercial airlines have reflected the changed circumstances of their work through their articulations against the normalizing of the changing employment relations discourses through the performances embedded in the materiality of resistance open to them in the changes ecosystems, and resort to actions which are 'less dramatic but equally real' forms of resistance (Prasad and Prasad 2000). The new forms of resistance of 'mobile workers' (Cohen 2010) reflect the growing uncertainties and insecurities of the emergent world of work and their struggles against managerial domination. (Barney and Kunda 2011) The mobile workers' 'spatial consciousness' leverages the space of the aircraft as a site to challenge managerial domination through creative resistance practices (Dale and Burrell 2007).

The examination of these changed mobile work circumstances and the articulations of resistance of cabin and cockpit mobile workers can turn to the Foucauldian Post-structuralist interpretative frame for theoretical and the methodological explorations as reflected in the words of Foucault (1976), "*Let us not, therefore, ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours, etc.*" The Foucauldian question in the changed employment relations circumstances is not only about how organized labour confronts realities but to examine "how things work at the level of on-going subjugation". Is there a revised grammar of resistance when we examine what the subjugated think, speak and do "at the "point of on-going subjugation" itself and "at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours". An examination of resistance "at the point of on-going subjugation" this in response to the Foucauldian question is of great significance both in terms of scholarship and also in terms of practice of resistance not only for union leadership but also for rank and file members.

Scholarship on worker mobilization and resistance has been studied through various theoretical perspectives over the last 100 years. The focus of institutional approaches is on rules (Dunlop 1958). and institutions (Flanders 1970; Fox 1973' Budd and Bhave 2008) which serve to restrain individual and collective (Commons 1934). Trade Unions have been conceptualized to have both an economic function (Webbs 1897) and social and political purposes (Flanders

1970). Research within the institutional approach is pro-employer (Kerr 1983), survives on on managerial acceptability (Capelli1985) with some concern for the social complexity of the employment relations dynamics (Kochan 1998). The focus is on employment relations context at the level of the firm, industry or nation and in that sense is disconnected from the reality of resistance “at the point of on-going subjugation” with its preoccupations with rules, laws, institutions which also signals a disconnect from the lived experiences of workers and their resistance “at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours".

An alternative to the institutional approach are the Marxist variants (Baverman 1974; Hyman 1975; Burawoy, 1979; Thompson and Ackroyd, 1995; Thompson and Smith, 2000) where the focus of analysis is on inequality founded on class differences and the consequent fundamental conflict between labour and management. As work is but an extension of the social world, employment relations from a Marxist perspective becomes an arena for the struggle for justice in employment relations and the establishment of a just social, economic and political order. The way to overcome this inequality would be by developing 'class consciousness' through political struggle but trade union action has been limited to the development of trade union consciousness (Trotsky 1977) and an antagonistic relationship with capital (Hyman, 1977; Hyman, 1971). Though trade unions are not without power, the strategic militancy of the employer-state nexus control over work processes is exercised through legal, social and economic instrumentalities (Joseph 2010). Both the role of the state as non-partisan actor in industrial relations and the possibility of accessing justice through the trade union movement

(Ramaswamy, 1984) have been eroding since the eighties. The retreat of the welfare state in neoliberal times reinforces limited roles for workers' collectives and promotes individualized employment relationships (Pollert and Charlwood, 2009). This lens focuses on class Consciousness, through descriptive studies but privileges it over gender, age, disability (Parker 1995). While it studies the management systems and controls to reduce the power of the working class by deskilling of work, the subject is 'missing' (Thompson 1990) as it explores resistance these through the actions of trade unions and political organizations.

This study has defined its theoretical scope by situating itself in the post-structuralist approach and the Foucauldian' critical ontology of the self' (Thomas and Davis 2005) , where the production of the self as well as normalization (Foucault 1977) , which is the construction of the idealized form of conduct, is effected through an 'embodied form of power' (Foucault 1977). It does not seek answers in the structures of class or in institutions as in this approach the exercise of power is proposed as the key to capitalist oppression (Knights and Willmott 1989) and detailed practices of power are employed to exert ideological control (Alvesson and Karreman 2004). Thus, the focus is on analysis of the discourses which “form” the subject according to its dictates.. The multiple discourses that exist as the subject forms herself shape her subjective consciousness. The exercise of power takes the form of “disciplinary power” which is oriented to define and limit the positions available to a worker and provides her with normalised scripts of who she should be and what she can do (Alvesson, 1996; Knights and Vurdubakis, 1994) and a sense of fear is also instilled through the “gaze” of “surveillance” as deterrence , thus discouraging the possibility of resistance to “on-going subjugation processes

(Karreman And Alvesson, 2009). To study resistance then and the various ways in which she resists by 'negating what does not exist', one has to move to the micro-level where effects of these powers are felt, at the level of subjectivities, “at the point of on-going subjugation. The 'suppressed, 'alienated subject', struggles to 'create, appropriate and transform' these discourses and thus creates her own meaning and subjectivities (Thomas and Davis 2005), resisting and reifying the organizational discourses.

It is this performance of the collective (Butler 1997,1990,1993; Goffman 1961,1974) at the level of subjectivities of the airline cockpit and cabin crew, which is the focus of this study and is studied at two discursive sites through the interviews of 58 Operating Employees representing the differing contexts of Flight Deck crew and Cabin Crew, Union Members, Office Bearers of Trade Unions and Non- Members along-with the company documents, reports and visual arts. Additionally, auto ethnographic accounts of the researcher and past officials and members of the trade union in the form of reflexive notes along-with observation of flights of varying durations have been collected. Participant experiences were accessed through unstructured interviews, free-flowing conversations, reflexive notes, and observation. The emphasis was towards obtaining experiences of the forms of power exercised by the organization towards control and inscription of identities, the performance of the collectives, and the resistance of the mobile worker “at the level of on-going subjugation”.

Methods of data analysis relied on intellectual traditions which fall within a post-structural framework. Memos were written about events and articulations emerging from the field notes

and transcripts(Augustine 2010). The metaphorical meaning of these events and articulations were sought to be identified. The underlying political processes were sought to be discovered, and existential positions that these events and articulations reflected were sought to be understood. They emphasize the situated, partial, localized, and self-referential nature of knowledge (Foucault 1980) arising from these interviews. This analysis provided the basis of thematic exploration of the narratives, with reflexivity guiding the process to make it trustworthy.

1.2 Research Purpose And Significance:

Worldwide the Aviation Industry has expanded rapidly with the age of the global (Fairris 2006), which requires global movements of capital (Guibboni 2007) to feed the expanding footprints of multinational corporations (Saddler 2000) and is the norm in the Post Industrialized world of work (Barney and Kunda 2011). Indian civil aviation, too has grown exponentially in the last two decades to fuel the spread of globalization, the resultant need for people and goods to be moved far and fast. In early India's passenger traffic stood at 341.05 million in FY20. total airplanes is expected to reach 1,100 planes by 2027 (IBEF 2021)

However, the increase in flight operations and aircraft acquisitions is not matched by employee numbers, which are decreasing even as the expansion occurs (DGCA 2018). The Indian commercial airlines is witnessing several organized articulations of workers concerns leading to disruption of flight operations and subsequent losses to the organizations and general public. In recent times however, this space has been shrinking even more with the 'strategic militant'

posture of the employers and these articulations of the worker have in several instances escalated due to management refusal to recognize unions with the tacit support of the state. Trade unions being derecognized, protesting workers being dismissed and union offices being closed (Joseph 2010) with the emergence of what has been termed as the narrative of New Public Management (NPM) and its professional and managerial subjectivities has also led to disinvestment and privatization (DuGay 1996, Thomas and Davis 2005, Bhowmik 2009, Venketeshan and Choudhary 2017).

The dominant commercial airlines in this space have been the public sector National Carrier Air India and its sister concerns operating regionally and domestically, the Indian Airlines. The private commercial airlines have within a span of two decades challenged these positions with inclusion of numerous aircrafts, young mobile workforce, and a sterile Union free environment. The institutions have altered their approach reflective of the changed stance of the Legislative, Executive, Judicial bodies as well as employers and managements in India. The tilt of government policy from welfare statism to a tilt towards with the entrepreneurial discourse of the market (Guerin et al 2004, Meyer 2016, Noronha & Beale 2011). The Labour Laws have been 'reformed' into four codes with limited consultations and the emergence of a hostile environment for trade unionism and collective action (Agarwala 2008, Mathew and Jain 2018). Reduction in support for public enterprises is reflected in the repeated public espousing of disinvestment, privatization, Abandonment narratives (Bhowmik 2009, Venketeshan and Choudhary 2017, Sampat 2008, Uba 2008, Sinha 2005, Hindu 2020).The repeated narratives

about public enterprises without action has led to a paralysis of these public enterprises with heightened insecurity of the workforce (Roychowdhary 2003).

Trade unions and associations have also been impacted with these agendas of neo-liberalism, with their influence in decline (Tapia et.al 2015, Hensman 2001, Hyman 1999), ability to engage in collective action hindered (Kelly 2012) striking workers being named 'terrorists' by top management facing strike action as reported in the press (Joseph 2010), the derecognition of craft based unions (Dharmadhikari 2012) and derecognition and subsequent closure of unions offices as reported in the press (Joseph 2010, ACEU vs Air India 2011)

The resultant job intensification, job redundancy, restructuring of the airlines along with the emergence of an unfriendly work environment and impossibility of collective action has created heightened insecurity among employees in general and mobile workers in particular in this study .

This study proposes to give the perspective of the worker in this changing context as she struggles for survival within the iron cage of workspaces through the resistance practices and processes by which she seeks fairness and justice in the workplace. The study aims to aid in the theoretical development of the field of industrial relations which has remain shackled in the outward manifestations of protest seen though a 'closed paradigm' of the institutional and class lens to the site of “the point of on-going subjugation”, the skirmishes, subtle everyday forms of resistance, clandestine and conscious through the Foucauldian post-structuralist lens. Thus, the focus is on the performed aspect of the collective which provide employees with discursive

resources as embodied in the individual vitality of resistance “at the point of on-going subjugation.

Responding to the call of the 'return to meaning' (Alvesson et.al 2017) the aim of the thesis is to establish meaning to what is being studied and add value to the context it is studying, in the given case towards understanding aviation “mobile” workers’ struggles as they resist the changing practices, laws and prescribed behaviour along with the constraints on collective mobilization during the course of their mobile work. This work, within the social science domain, does not aim to offer generalisations which will be stable across contexts and situations, however it does offer an understanding of the complex mobile workplace through social constructions of the dynamics of collectives, of normalizations, of rules and structures, of spaces and movements and of human embodiments of these discourses while all the while 'the interpreting researcher is studying the interpreting subjects' (Giddens 1982).

In this qualitative study, the researcher is both a tool of data collection and data herself. Her personal lived experiences in the field that she has engaged for almost two decades would add depth and topicality to the study. The researcher herself has worked in aviation for a long period and in that time was an active trade union representative of the employees of the state run public commercial airline. She experienced the upheavals of the workers lives and the diminishing role of trade unions as their protector. The gender politics at the aviation company, the trade union organizations search for meaning, the changes in the workers expectations and the futility of traditional actions, all enthused her to delve into the intricacies of worker resistance through the re-inscription of the normalizing totalitarian discourses. The study

recognizes that to find meaning of work, it has to engage with the dynamics of power relations "at the point of on-going subjugation". .

1.3 Structure Of The Thesis

The thesis is structured into seven chapters . A brief overview of each of the chapters is given below.

Chapter 1 Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce the scope of the study by bringing into focus the normalising discourse towards control by the employer and the workers use of the ambiguities to create space for re-inscription at the level of subjectivities. Then I move on to a brief discussion on the declining role of the trade unions to represent the worker and overall subjugation of the collective thus leaving the worker to be creative with her resistance. I lay out some of the issues of Indian commercial airline workers through whom the march of globalization is quickened and the mobile nature of their work which brings the dimension of spatial appropriation into the struggle to create meanings. I discuss the data site and methods in brief focussing on the post-structuralist lens which is informing the study. Following this I move on to describing the research purpose and broad significance of the thesis. The broad objective was to understand industrial relations in the context of mobile workers in this case aviation workers.

Chapter 2 Contextualizing Indian Aviation

This chapter introduces the context of the study, beginning with the historical background of civil aviation in India. It describes its journey and the persons who influenced it. It also focusses on the metrics which reflect this growth with technology, polity and economics as the drivers. I then move to discuss the workers employed here , their skills and insecurities. The role of trade unions is then explored historically and topically with the government led dilution of its rights. The trade unions and associations in the aviation industry are discussed with their inter and intra dynamics. The gender variation in aviation is then discussed with professionals and trade unions role in it.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

This chapter discusses the concepts used in this study by engaging in a review of existing literature on industrial relations and workers collective, its diverse aspects and its meaning in the Indian context, aspects of gender relations and women's work, the subjectivities of the worker and her struggle for contested meanings through resistance in the context of mobile work. The power and resistance and the embodiment of mobile work is discussed though the industrial relations, labour process, post-structuralist and human geography theoretical perspectives. The conclusion binds the literature review together to spell out the conceptual strands of the study.

Chapter 4 Design and Methodology

In Chapter 4, I begin with the philosophical lens which has informed this study then move to the resultant methodology, methods, and tools. After discussing the research approach of post structuralism, stating the features of the interpretive paradigm, I delve into a detailed discussion on the discursive sites, my personal journey and the participants of the study. Then the

discussion on methods of data collection elabourates the rationale of the field work undertaken. The research questions are then detailed by the data analysis procedures where the post structuralist lens has informed the examination of the data to capture meaning and the maintenance of trustworthiness. Towards the end I discuss the ethical considerations.

Chapter 5 Analysis and Interpretation

In this chapter I discuss the core themes and the experiences of the mobile workers gathered through the participants interactions as well as documents and other observations. The themes of Nomadic Solidarity, Subversive Hospitality, Sacrificial Legal Figure, Broken Subjectivity and Insecure Worker are detailed.

Chapter 6 Discussions and Conclusions

Chapter 6 include an overview and interpretation of the major findings as related to understanding the morphology of the changes in the context of mobile work, and the mobile workers experience and response to the subjugation. Also included is the linking of the themes uncovered in these findings with the related literature, on mobile workers discipline and resistance which provided the theoretical lens and a guide to interpretation of data.

Chapter 7 Summary, Findings and Conclusion

This chapter provides a summary of the literature review, methods, and theoretical articulation of mobile workers collectivization and resistance based on the lived experiences of the mobile worker and the crafting of different expressions of mobile resistance. Next, the contributions to theory and practice are outlined. Finally the limits of this thesis and directions for future research are pointed out.

2 Chapter 2: Contextualizing Indian Aviation

2.1 Overview Of Indian Aviation Historical

In 1911, Allahabad (now Prayagraj in state of Uttar Pradesh) was the site of the first commercial flight but the true genesis of Indian commercial aviation lay in the first commercial airline Tata Airlines maiden fight piloted by JRD Tata, in a single engine De Havilland Puss Moth from Karachi to Bombay (IATA 2011) in October of 1932. Soon, Indian Trans Continental Airways, Madras Air Taxi Services, Indian National Airways (1932-1934) and Deccan Airways (1945) started operations. In 1946, Tata Airlines was rechristened Air India (Tata Group` 2019) with its strategy built around its host 'Maharaja' image, which symbolised the new exotic, glamourous India and the era of International flights began in 1946. However, with the passing of the Air Corporations Act in 1953, all the existing airlines were 'nationalised' and merged into two airlines-Indian Airlines (domestic operations) and Air India International (International Operations).

With the 'open skies' policy in 1992, the monopoly of the public sector airlines was challenged with the advent of Jet Airways, Air Sahara, Modiluft, Damania Airways, NEPC Airlines and East West Airlines, who operated domestically. The Indian Scheduled airlines ,who had been in continuously operating fights for the last 5 years ad had atleast 20 aircrafts on their fleet, were in 2004 given permission to operate internationally (PIB 2011). Overview of the regulatory environment is detailed in Appendix- A.

Out of total 92 scheduled international operators, top 6 operators accounted for nearly 50% of total international Passenger traffic and top 15 operators accounted for nearly three fourth of the total international Passenger traffic in the year 2018-19. Jet Airways had the maximum market share (12.1%) followed by Air India (10.5%), Emirates Airline (8.7%), IndiGo (7.4%), and Air India Express (6.5%).(DGCA 2020a). The number of passengers in the first quarter of 2020 from and into India in International flights were 1,25,67,689. Of these 6044021 were carried by the Indian carriers, with the share of the public carriers being highest at 25,82,841. Passengers carried by domestic airlines during Jan-Feb 2020 were 251.50 lakhs as against 238.56 lakhs during the corresponding period of the previous year, thereby registering an annual growth of 5.42%and monthly growth of 8.98%.(DGCA 2020b).Fifteen scheduled commercial airlines are operating in India today with six of them operating internationally (DGCA 2020c). While the national carrier Air India not only provided the initial impetus, it was also the flag bearer of the national pride and ambition represented by the geopolitical reach (Adey 2006, Butler 2001)

With the open skies policy, the aviation industry has several operators now thus dropping Air India (merged entity) from a complete monopoly before 1991 to a market share of only 13.90% of the domestic operations with the other private airlines sharing the rest 86.10%. It is also looking at complete disinvestment and loss of its status as a public sector undertaking (The Hindu, January 2020)

The aviation infrastructure with its humble beginnings at the Juhu Aerodrome as the makeshift office of the first airline was also the site of the Bombay Flying Club, which in its first year of existence had its pupil JRD who was the first to get an 'A' Licence to fly. Within a few months, the first woman pilot Ms. Petit also received the 'A' License (Private Flying 1929). In the year 2017-18, the civil aviation regulatory body Directorate of Civil Aviation (DGCA) issued 6359 licenses, endorsements & Foreign Aircrew Temporary Authorisation (FATA) (Annual Report, MOCA 2018).

India has by September 2020, 125 airports in operation, including 29 international airports, overall they serviced 2254950 aircraft, 2902.29 lakh passengers and 3053 thousand tonnes of freight (Annual Report, MOCA 2018). FDI inflow in India's air transport sector (including air freight) reached US$ 2.75 billion between April 2000 and March 2020 (IBEF 2020). Though buying of aircraft by airlines remains the dominant mode of acquiring them, leasing has also become an acceptable practice. The aircraft have also evolved into complex machines with immense technology engagement between the pilot and the aircraft (Laming 2000) with 50,000 electronic exchanges to get a B747 airborne (Graham 1998) and with over 2.6 million lines of software code incorporated in a Boeing 777 avionics and entertainment systems (Norris and Wagner, 1996). Maintaining them and the ancillary training equipment is a substantial portion of the expenses of the airlines. (Table 2-2) The major airlines build training facilities to also use them as profit centres by leasing the machine and personnel. The experienced pilots who are designated Instructors and Examiners in their airline may also be 'deputed' to DGCA and others and their expertise utilized to the maximum extent. This action of the management often

leads to role conflicts of the pilots caught between the parent airline and the government machinery, the consequences of which sometimes spills into the public arena (PTI, June 2020).

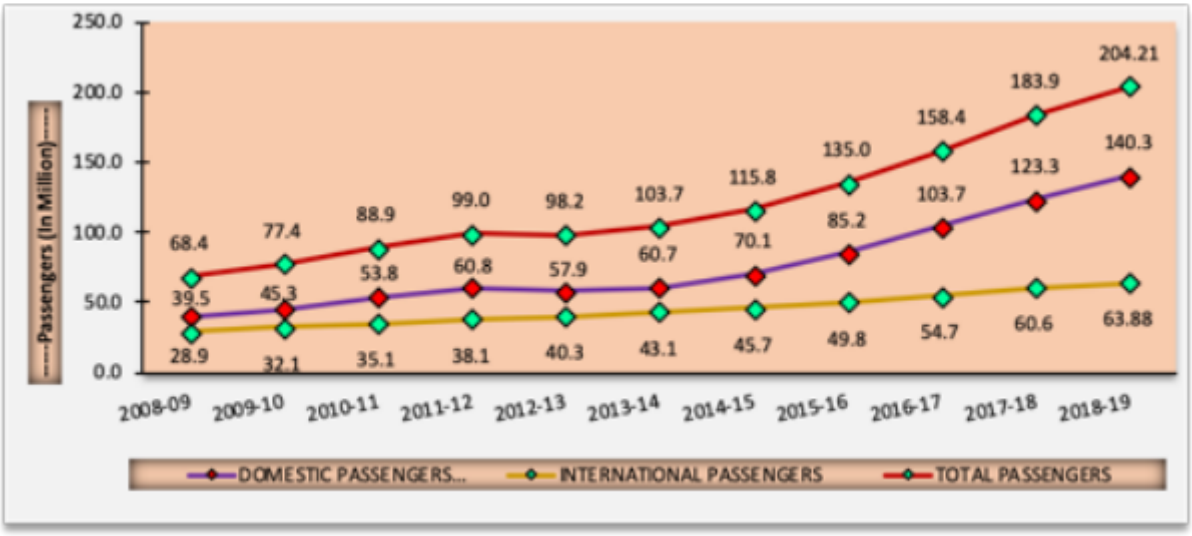
Table 2-1: Civil Aviation Flight Operations Analysis

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Total Aircraft (Scheduled Operations)	410	409	448	620	691
Scheduled Departures (in Lacs)	8.97	10.22	11.55	13.01	14.46
Passenger Carried by Scheduled Operators	115.78	134.98	158.43	183.91	204.21

Source: Directorate of Air Transport-II and Researchers own

With the increased number and capacity of airports and the enlargement of airline fleets, coupled with the increased living standards, there is a continuous increase in traveling passengers. In the Domestic airlines itself there is a 2.53% increase in the passengers carried, who in the period of Jan-Apr 2019 carried 464.47 lakh passengers. From 2008-09 to 2018-19, the capacity (ASK) in the domestic market grew at a rate of 10.24% (CAGR) while the demand (RPK) grew at 13.59% (CAGR) during the same period. (DGCA Handbook 2018-19) (Table 2-2).

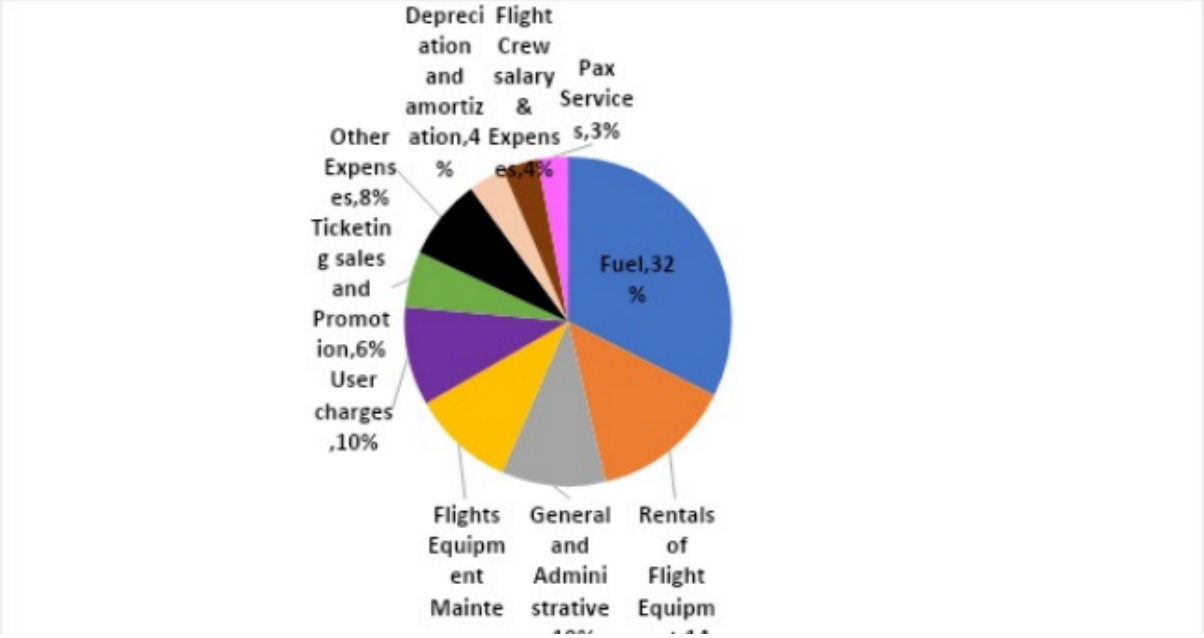
Table 2-2: Ten Year Passenger Traffic Data



Source: DGCA Handbook 2018-19

Though the increase in routes, airports and passenger traffic is exponential, the number of employees per aircraft has decreased. The cost of operating crew is about 3.5% of the total cost of operations and is being reduced progressively(Table 2-3). The fifteen scheduled Airlines now employ over 58000 employees, of which 7183 are pilots, and 13084 are cabin crew (Handbook of Civil Aviation Statistics 2017-18). However, with the abrupt shutting down of Jet Airways (Jet Airways Press Release, 2019) and the proposed disinvestment through privatization of Air India (PTI 3.07.2019), the employees are faced with the "stark reality of insecurity, uncertainty, and surveillance" (Fraher, A. L., & Gabriel, Y. 2016).

Table 2-3: Cost Structure of Aviation Industry in India (2017-18)


Depreci ation and amortiz ation,4 %
Flight Crew salary & Expens es,4%
Pax Service s,3%
Other Expens es,8%
Ticketin g sales and Promot ion,6%
User charges ,10%
Fuel,32 %
Flights Equipm ent Mainte
General and Admini strative
Rentals of Flight Equipm

Source: DGCA Handbook 2018-19

2.2 Trade Unions And Workers Collectives In Indian Commercial Airlines

The Indian airline industry originated through entrepreneurial passion (Tata 1994) but its development has been under the watchful eye of the Government through its regulatory bodies, investments in supporting infrastructures, or its ownership of the national carriers (IATA and SOIF 2018). In the era preceding the Liberalisation of the economy in 1991, 'politics of mobility' ensured that aviation was an elitist, exclusionary domain. Its flying crew were mythical gods and goddesses who epitomised the bright new India, one of technological advancement but which was still rooted in Indian culture.

The Indian Trade Union movement is rooted in the history of India's colonial period and intertwined with its struggle for freedom (Bhattacherjee and Ackers 2010). The workers were

the fuel to the independence fire with their leadership emerging as a response to the twin exploiters, the British and the Capitalist. Their struggles led to the recognition of the movement through the legislation of the Trade Unions Act of 1926. The Communist led unions organized under the banner of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) (Candland 2007). Post-Independence the leading political party and the frontrunner in the struggle for independence, the Indian National Congress, formed its union federation, the Indian National Trade Union Congress- INTUC (Noronha & Beale 2011). In time several political parties, both national and regional, set up union federations, amongst them the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh has its ideological base in the RSS and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. Others split from existing unions like the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) affiliated to the Communist Party of India – Marxist. In the regional Trade Unions, the Bhartiya Kamgar Sena, affiliated with the Mumbai-centered Shiv Sena, has sizeable influence in the commercial capital Mumbai. The nationalist fervor of the unions is demonstrated with every political party having a labour wing (Agarwala 2012)

The Post-Independence era Government espoused labour welfare but fell short in its implementation by not providing labour protection to all citizens of India (Agarwala 2008). The 'evisceration' of the welfare state (Meyer 2016) worldwide is reflected in the neo-liberal shift away from the socialist principles that governed the initial years of free India.

The economic pressures on emerging economies have escalated the push towards liberalization policies by the governments towards deregulation, rapid creation of SEZ (Sampat 2008),

privatization of public enterprises (Uba 2008, Sinha 2005, Candland 2007) lifting trade and license regulations (Hyman 1992), leading to the rollback of labour protection and welfare measures. Worker protection and its associated benefits were confined only to the formal sector workers, who constitute about ten percent of the total workforce (World Bank 2010), leaving the vast majority of the informal workforce bereft of any protection with many more workers being pushed towards informal work and its precarity. With the central government policies tending towards the neo-liberal frames (Noronha & Beale 2011), inter-state competition to attract investments has resulted in pushing the labour standards down towards dilution (Bhattacharjee 1999). Various states have enacted amendments to labour laws (Jha 2015), and the proposed national Industrial Relations Bill has diluted the idea of collective bargaining (Mathew & Jain 2018), allows 'exit policy' championed for long by employer bodies (Hensman 2001), thus further emasculating the unions by constricting the right to strike work and the involvement of activists and others in trade unions (Mathew & Jain 2018, Secki 2015).The Union response was increased protests organized by trade unions and social movements at least till 2003 (Uba 2008) but with dwindling membership and staying capacity.

Table 2-4: Operating Crew Unions in Indian Civil Aviation

Collective	Year of Establishment	Representation	Status	Affiliation
International Transport Workers Federation	1886	Earlier Maritime, now all transport Workers.	Active- Trade Union; Aviation non-pilots union are affiliated	None
Indian Pilots Guild	1948	Pilots of wide bodied aircraft, erstwhile Air India	Active- Registered Trade Union; Currently Derecognised	None- later NCP
International Federation of Airline Pilots (Indian Wing-ALPA)	1948	Pilots of civil aviation	Active - Registered Society; through their Unions- IPG,ICPA & NAG	None
Air Corporations Employees Union	1953	Cabin Crew along with other categorises of employees	Active- Trade Union Recognised	CITU
Indian Commercial Pilots Association	1961	Pilots of narrow bodied aircraft, erstwhile Indian Airlines	Active- Registered Trade Union; Recognised	None
Air India Employees Guild	1972	Mostly Ground employees with few Cabin Crew of Wide bodied	Active- Trade Union	Various
Air India Cabin Crew Association	1973	Cabin Crew of mostly wide bodied & a few narrow bodied	Active- Trade Union, Currently Derecognised	Shiv Sena
Federation of Indian Pilots	1996	Pilots of Indian civil aviation companies- Individual Members	Active- Association- Insurance , Skilling & Trade Union	None
Airline Cabin Crew Association	1998	Cabin Crew of narrow bodied aircraft (Indian Airlines)	Inactive- Registered Trade Union- Never given recognition	None
SWIP	2000	Pilots of Jet Airways	Welfare Association- Dormant(revival in place despite organization closed in 2019	None
National Aviators Guild	2009	Pilots of Jet Airways	Inactive- Registered Trade Union, Never Recognised	None

Source: Compiled by Researcher

The first workers association in Indian aviation, the Indian Pilots Guild (IPG), was led by JRD Tata in the year 1948, representing the pilots of Air India International Limited. The Father of Indian Aviation, himself a pilot and a professional, represented the face of Air Transport and led the daredevils and the rare breed of pilots. The Indian Pilots Guild still continues, but with multiple derecognitions by the airline management and summary termination of its leaders, it is but a shadow of its past. The nationalization of Air Transport led to the Air Corporations Act -1953, which created two Public Sector Units. Air India International Corporation took over the assets of Air India International Limited, and Indian Airlines amalgamated within it the other airlines operating domestically in India. Other than Pilots, the employees also organized and around 1953, formed the Air Corporations Employees Union (ACEU). The cabin crew of IA broke away from ACEU and formed the Air India Cabin Crew Association (AICCA) in 1973, as did many others, including the Ground Engineers, the technicians– Aircraft Engineers, the flight engineers, the officers. The call of the craft and the identification of the employees with it was the determining factor (in conversation) along with the widening divide between the 'two sisters' Air India and Indian Airlines. The unions often split, sometimes due to conflicting directions of its leaders, other times due to its schisms within its membership, and mostly due to decreased identification with the older union and the pull of the new which was more representative of its membership.

The historical antagonism between the unions and management began alongside the birth of civil aviation in India. In 1954 the ACEU put forth its demands to the management of Air India International Corporation (AI). This first dispute was long drawn, exploring in its journey the

whole gamut of legal redressal of the Indian Judiciary. which led to a long dispute by the time the open skies policy of the government came into force. There have been several crippling strikes by all unions along with regular skirmishes in the form of 'work to rule', 'go slow' and 'reporting sick'.

The women in aviation were included predominantly in gender specific roles with lower paying, less career building positions. The cabin crew were predominantly women who had to wage a protracted legal battle to gain their work rights (Financial Express 2003, Chua and Engel 2019) The pilots on the other hand were mostly male, initially channeled into civil aviation through an earlier career in the nations Navy and Air Force. Though the first woman pilot, a married mother of one, Sarla Thakral-Sharma first flew solo in a Puss Moth in 1936 (Ramachandran 2006), till the early 1990s, only a handful of women were employed. With the open skies policy, the scenario changed and with the demand for skilled pilots far exceeding supply, women were inducted in larger numbers.

For women, whether cabin crew or pilots, the struggles for motherhood and care responsibilities continues along with facing gender bias in careers, training and operations. The narrative of the 'professional' discourages complaints behaviour as unbecoming of a person with a professional identity and standing. The lack of active and assertive support from the lack of representation in union leadership positions further exacerbated the problem of lack of voice. The influence of women employees in the unions was minimal with no senior leadership role being entrusted to women barring one token position assigned to a woman union member.

The civil aviation picture which emerges in India is that of a growing passenger market, multiple airline players vying for the passenger markets, receding role of publicly owned

airlines and the concomitant dominance of privately owned airlines aided by state bias towards the privately owned enterprises, rising numbers of owned as well as leased aircrafts in operation, rising fuel costs and increasing taxes and tariffs on just about all elements of aviation businesses.

The picture related to the aviation employees on the other hand is one of progressively increasing workload, lesser numbers and lower total remuneration while at the same time collective mobilization and bilateralism in determining employment terms are not only on the wane but also rendered extremely hazardous for activist employees and employee leaders given hostile regulatory agencies, militant airline managements and pro employer legislative and justice systems and outcomes. Collective action has become difficult with rising anti-employee and anti-union sentiment among the flying public, media houses and managements has made voicing of grievances and organization of protests increasingly intimidating. There is a heightened sense of insecurity not only of incomes but also daily working and ultimately employment itself with rising instances of suspensions, retrenchments and terminations. Mobile workers have never been more insecure and therefore working under tremendous work intensification pressure but also the unproductive pressure of insecure mobile working, fluctuating incomes and uncertain tenures of employment. The profiling of the context of civil aviation shows that mobile work environments are blatantly unfriendly towards any form of collective or individual resistance.

It might be relevant to turn to literature related to collective and individual resistance in dealing with the grim emerging context of mobile work in order to gain insights from theoretical and empirical studies related to the purposes of this study. Literature review follows.

3 Chapter 3 Literature Review

3.1 Workers Collective

'Everybody instinctively knows what Industrial Relations is about, even those who have never studied the subject, it is "about" trade unions, managers and collective bargaining' (Marsden 1982).

The study of work is a contested field embracing both conflict and consent. This concern has given a multidisciplinary effect to this domain with solving real world problems at its core (Kaufmann 2004). There are several systematic attempts to develop perspectives to study IR such as the injustice and exploitation theoretical perspective (Kelly 1998), theory of industrial relations systems (Dunlop 1958), Fox's unitary, pluralist and radical frames of references (1966) , , and later the egoist frame (Budd and Bhave 2008). These disciplinary perspectives are primarily aimed at containing conflict though rules, institutionalization or rationality (Clegg 1976, Flanders 1970, Hyman 1977). In a differing view- (Joseph 2004) provides us with ten conceptual lenses within the theoretical frame of 'negotiated connectedness'.

Traditionally, scholars have engaged in a vast body of work focussing mostly on organized labour and associated issues like strikes, collective bargaining and workers representation and resistance through trade unions (Tapia et al 2015; Mc Cabe et al 2019). It has viewed trade unions and other workers collectives through their processes of representation of workers interests and conceptualized the interacting institutions as balancers of asymmetrical power in employment relationships (Frege 2005). Emphasis is on their role in increasing wages and giving employee voice in engaging with employers and the agencies of the state (Freeman and Medoff 1984). They go beyond this and represent the 'societal reality of solidarity, community

and the demonstration of the ability to collectivize in the face of shared and common experiences (Jagannathan and Roy 2009). Webb and Webb (1897) in their study of trade unions have framed them as a source for industrial democracy through mutual insurance, collective bargaining and legal enactments. Trade unions emerge as workers' collectives to ensure that workers have a voice in the framing of the rules and their everyday negotiation. Webb and Webb (1897) focus on the economic emphasis of trade unions where they play an important role in ensuring that workers get adequate wages and appropriate working conditions for the labour power expended by them. Meanwhile Flanders (1970) indicates that the collective purpose of trade unions has larger social purposes, as it builds in workers a class consciousness which can then be mobilised. Bhowmik (2012) has a more comprehensive perspective when he saw trade unions as 'organisations of workers that attempt to protect their interests against the power of the employers and the state and its institutions'.

However workers collectives in the form of Trade Unions are under siege due to several reasons including the employers attack on collective efforts and organizations of workers by reducing the facilities provided for unions and their leaders, withdrawing protection to union officers and in extreme cases even derecognising unions (Kelly 2012). The constraints and crisis that counter hegemonic revolutionary action confronts (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) is reflected in the case of IPG's office closure at the instance of a strike in 2013. A union representative of a derecognized aviation union adds:

"the union office was a hub of activity, a thriving social culture was alive now there is no direction, no control, just packed up." (Kapadia in conversation in January , 2014).

This has reduced the collective bargaining strength of the unions. Some of the reasons for this decline are within the union itself with the reduction in membership of existing organizations (Das 1999), a non-aggressive union leadership and the increasing shift towards individualization and contingent workforce realities, and its non-engagement with this category of temporary and casual workers (Heery and Abbott, 2000; ILO, 2016; Lowe, 2018; Machin, 2000). The state of collective action by trade unions through large scale mobilization of workers has ebbed and may move towards 'status action' by isolated communities (Crook et al 1992).

In the Indian context this erosion of relevance is chiefly due to government tilt towards discourses of the market linked to globalization (Kuruvilla and Erickson 2002). The large workforce is overwhelmingly informal (Hensman 2010) thus not covered by the basic labour legislations, only 1% is unionised (Davala 1995) and attempts to unionize result in dismissals or closure of establishments (Joseph 2010, Hensman 2010, Bhowmik 2009). The premise of 'collective voice' rests on pluralistic democratic principles (Turnbull, 1991), with assumptions that both are based on democratic fairness and procedures of law (Bhattacharjee 2001). Even in the public sector the space for resistance is fast eroding due to the new liberalization policies in India with 'right to strike' being upheld as not a 'fundamental right' (Guruswamy 2015) with public employees and public sector organizations being forced to march to the beat of 'liberalization, deregulation, technological revolution, marketization and the resultant compulsions of legitimate and pathological competitiveness' (Joseph 2004). The twin onslaught of 'labour reforms' and 'privatization' destroys job security and the resultant dignity of the worker.

"*Unions managed to remove the 'mai-baap' culture; ad-hoc manipulative horse trading was stopped, it was fair for all'* Kapadia ,in conversation, 2015.

The collective actors are changing too and even the concept of a workers collective is changing with other activist groups such as civil society (Spicer & Bohm 2007,Castells 2012) playing the role of representing workers. The interests of workers are dependent on their individual and collective identities (Streek 1993) and the subjectivities mediated by habitus shape their actions (Bourdieu 1990). However integration of issues like gender and sexuality (Piore and Safford 2006, Edwards 2003) has been absent in trade union discourse. Assumptions that trade unions are 'effective' collective action agents of workers (Tapia et al 2015) is no longer a given.

"A self does not amount to much, but no self is an island; each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before." (J.-F. Lyotard 1984)

Trade Unions are fascinating but complex organizations (Barling et al 1992) affected by the changes and events around the world (Kelloway et al 1998). Trade unions represent the 'ethics of the collective' as they make real the solidarity and community with their action of getting the workers together. These workers aggregating is driven by their shared experiences (Jagannathan & Roy 2009). Thus to study them, we must construct the meaning of life from the lived experiences of people in that context as conflict would be in the form of 'status action' by specific groups or individuals (Crook et al,1992, Lash and Urry 1987) and not necessarily by mobilised organized workers. This insight is often an ignored aspect of workers collectivization in the present context of 'globalization, liberalization and deregulation' (Joseph 2004).

But how are these collectives formed? Collectives are not simply a 'social fact'. The specific level of the aggregate crowd is not that of an ontologized entity but is a much more complex phenomenon. It has been seen as the 'action of the impatient' taken to modify a condition of strain, occurring when institutional structural social action is under strain but unable to overcome it due to inadequacy (Smelser 1962),. Existing studies have analysed organizing strategies of workers, the collective action and its precursor the collective identity, the social identification and categorisation, solidarity, collective consciousness, Marxian Class consciousness (Avineri 1968; Cohen 1978) and Durkheim's concepts of mechanical and organic solidarity (Durkheim 2010, Hornsby 2007, Merton 1934).

Social Psychology suggests that collective identities are products of and are produced by interaction and sociocultural structures (Hunt & Bentford 2004) . In a differing view- Joseph (2004) provides us with two conceptual lenses to read managerial literatures – associational connectedness and communitarian connectedness. In Joseph's (2004) words, "The communitarian approach revolves around collective responsibility and accountability, dialogue and consensus, shared values and shared information, delayering of decision and action arrangements, grassroots empowerment". And for the sake of livelihood and life, human beings decide to belong to the collective. D Roys's (1952) ethnographic study of factory life indicated how important it was for individuals to fit in and be a part of the group (Baron & Pfeffer, 1994). Individuals are drawn to others like themselves, in part because attraction toward similar others is self-gratifying, and because communication with similar others is often easier, as is the development of trust (Kanter, 199). 'The tendency to like and trust others like ourselves is particularly strong in situations that are uncertain' (Sharma, 1990). The slimmest security which

belonging to the collective provides is latched on to by the worker, the survivor (Canetti 1973). In Zizek's (1989) analysis of hegemony, freedom is subverted through an enforced apparatus of symbolization and totalization, which restricts the discursive resources available to social subjects. Dialogue and consensus exclude dissent, conflict and contradiction. Yet, as labour process theorists suggest (Braverman, 1974; Burawoy 1979), following from a classic Marxist position (Marx, 1973), it is contradiction and conflict that are a fundamental composite of the employment condition. The political intent of liberalism is to eliminate the possibility of conflict as a praxis of the worker, and replace it with an acceptance of inequalities and subjugations, in return for guarantees of minimalist autonomy and adequate material sustenance. "*As soon as it exists at all, it wants to consist of more people: the urge to grow is the first and supreme attribute of the crowd. It wants to seize everyone within reach; anything shaped like a human being can join it"* (Canetti, 1960/1981).

This collective does not occur organically but human network efforts have to be made to make it happen. These human networks are essentially performances, which involve emotion, speech, leadership, communications, body and calculation driven. These rational arguments convey solidarity, a coming together that includes antagonism. It involves all kinds of sharing as structured by the organization normalizing discourses, (memos, argument , solidarity) and then collectivizing as a breach of these which demand discipline in the labour process. It is an outcome of experience (Thompson 1963/1991), the workers are active and conscious participants in its own making. Such a command to a group of people makes a crowd of them. It originates from a few and then has an innate urge to grow (Canetti, 1960/1981).The

collectives coming together happens in human relationships. As E.P Thompson elaborates in *The making of the English Working Class,* the coming together is an outcome of experiences and the workers are an active an conscious participants in the formation of the workers class. The worker class is defined by consciousness brought about by a set of common experiences felt and articulation of the identity of their interest as between themselves and also against the others who oppress them. The thrust that Thompson brings to fore is the determination that the worker plays in the construction of this class, his collective.

A collective then is a condition of being collective, 'a wave', a unity which is akin to a movement (Canneti 1960/1981). This heterogenous congregation, this coming together happens when it is given a direction, organizing themselves in a rhythm through a 'discharge', with an excitement where the individual differences, though they stay, are not the focus, the light shines on the unattained goal. The collective offers a state to her, where the burdened worker, 'imbued with commands, subdued to power differences' can get her flesh rid of the 'stings' she had endured.(Brighenti 2006). '*Only together can men free themselves from the burden of distance'* Canetti (1960/1981)

Latour (1999) presents the idea of a collective simply as "the association of humans and non-humans". Callon and Law (1995, p. 485) drawing on a performative ontology, propose a collective as "an emergent effect created by interaction of the heterogeneous parts that make it up... So it's the relations – and their heterogeneity – that are important. Relations which perform." Agency is, thus, understood as being collective and as emerging out of the heterogeneous mix. The word collective also recognizes the core capacity to collect and hold various elements together.

This study further aims to explore the working class , not as a thing whose grievances have to be "handled and channelled" (Smelser 1962) in order for it to accept its social role and not disturb the existing harmonious co-existence of these social groups. We have to think of this class as a relationship (Thompson,1980) born out of cultural and social formations and as a process.

3.2 Power And Resistance

'But with or without trade unions, workers respond to the inherent alienation of wage work through creative resistance'. (Schone-Boom 2007) We cannot study organizational life and space without understanding the way workers resist the organizational discourse. It is a 'key thematic 'of organizational life (Mumby et.al. 2017). Our differing understandings of power and subjectivity influence the ways in which we theorise resistance.

There are many varied ways in which resistance has been explored, inducing some to call it a 'catchall term' (Deetz 2008). Rubin defines it as, 'actions involving consciousness, collective action, and direct challenges to structures of power'. From a narrow focus to overt collective actions, it is now studied to include the most subtle acts of dissent (Thomas & Davis,2005) . Weitz studied women's hairstyles where the women struggled with the cultural ideas of women's bodies, describing resistance as 'actions that not only reject subordination but do so by challenging the ideologies that support that subordination (Weitz 2001) Earlier positioned in the negative paradigm which was in 'opposition', '*any behavior or discourse .., .that countered or disrupted the dominant bureaucratic discourse* (Trethewey, 1997), it also faced the challenge of simultaneously capturing the practices which at the same time, confirmed and resisted management practices (Buroway 1979). The different ways it has been explored is a

reflection of the increasing constraints on the resisting avenues, partly due to the decline of workers collectives such as trade unions, whose own decline is linked to the increase in contingent work, reduction in manufacturing jobs, the narrative of global economy and its supportive government practices. The reduction of open spaces for resistance has led to a shift from more formal (Hyman 1972) and spontaneous strikes (McCabe 2007) which involves organised workers efforts (Friedman 1977, Gouldner 1954) towards 'routine' (Scott 1985) less visible , more indirect and mundane forms (Prasad and Prasad 2000) which is sometimes covert in nature. Lately the more obscure forms of resistance have garnered attention with mockery and silence (Ybema and Horvers 2017), humour, ridicule and cynicism (Collinson 1994, Fleming and Spicer 2003), whistleblowing (Weishkopf & Tobais-Miersch 2016), misbehaviour (Ackroyd and Thompson 1999, Knights and McCabe 2000) and additionally exiting and resigning (Parker 2014).

This resistance is multifaceted and in additional to the employees mostly blue collar, managers (Thomas et.al 2011) and consultants (Karreman and Alvesson 2009), sometimes alone and others in concert with the workers have sabotaged or established new ways of working (O'Mahoney et.al 2013). This blurring of individual and collective resistance signifies its contradictory nature, at once resisting and collaborating in resisting organizational efforts towards controlling meaning and identity. Individual resistance thus can give rise to collective (Courpasson 2017) and collaborative resistance (Thursfield 2015).

The resistance is also enacted through the creation of alternative meanings and its readings through the post-structuralist lens of subjectivity and identity often at the level of micro-

resistance (Thomas & Davis 2005). It is not necessarily negative and oppositional (Courpasson 2017) and can be positive, facilitative and also productive (McCabe 2019).

Resistance has been studied through lenses of subjectivity and discontentment (Fleming and Sewell, 2002), discourses (Fleming and Spicer, 2003), micro-politics of identities (Thomas and Davies, 2005) or the production of specific objects (Courpasson et al., 2012). Elias Canetti in 'Crowds & Power' articulates this phenomenon thus, "*No normal man feels less free because he obeys his own impulses. Even when they are strongest and their satisfactions positively dangerous, he feels that his actions spring from himself. But there is no man who does not turn against a command imposed on him from outside; in this case everyone speaks of pressure and reserves the right to vengeance or rebellion.*" (1984).

When faced with this external command, the employee experiences it as something, which is not really his own. She is aware of the unalterable nature of the relationship, of the preyed and the hunter, which exists between the two forever and through which command is delivered. It leaves a sting which can remain submerged but is never forgotten or forgiven and can only be rid of by giving the same order to someone else.

The 'Foucauldian' turn in organizational studies has shifted the analysis to the level of subjectivities, thus focusing on subjectivizing forces of disciplinary technologies (Thomas and Davis 2005). The workplace resistance has not subsided rather the workers are participating in their own subjugation though the colonizing of worker subjectivities. The micro-politics of resistance whereby individuals exploit the looseness around meanings in a constant and simultaneous process of resistance, reproduction and re-inscription is the reality at the point of on-going subjugation .

The organizational discourses, the bounded areas of social knowledge constrain or enable these performances. Disciplinary power proceeds primarily through the organization, its enclosure and control of individuals in space (Soja 1989). To understand the process by which knowledge serves as a manifestation of power and circulates the effects of power, the analysis of it, in terms of domain, implantation, placement and transposition would be required (Foucault 1977). In the opening chapter of Crime and Punishment, Foucault states,

"*We should admit.. that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it) because it serves power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations*." (1997)

The panopticon for Foucault represents a state in the normalization of individuals necessary for the government of life processes. The disciplinary techniques which are employed include spatial distribution of individuals and control of the activities. Thus, power is a much more material force than economic priorities of Marxist perspectives. This discipline produces practiced bodies, which are normalized to the dominant organizational discourse. As this disciplinary power multiplies, it produces sites of resistance. This resistance is not reactionary but more like a state of power engendered or incited on account of the potential counter power that coexists. Thus, while the power is being deployed it is also being constructed and resisted at the very point of on-going subjugation

The individuals are not docile bodies but the product of power relations and institutions (Thompson and Ackroyd 1995). An individual's comprehension of self takes shape as she starts to draw a parallel with the prescribed roles and the manner in which they distance themselves from them (Goffman 1961). As the individual balances her position, she becomes a 'stance taking entity' between identification with the organisation or away from it. This movement is an act of interpretation to create their sense of self though freely choosing to make meaning through their self-awareness, self-management and self-display (Kunda 2009).

Performance can be driven towards subverting dominant discourses. Thus, even when they subvert they appropriate parts of the dominant discourses. The industrial relations discourse is subverting various aspects of managerialism, however still operating within the same frame of employment relationships. The opposition thus reiterates the dominant discourses, however, the performances are ambiguous. These performances, particularly in the services sector, may be best placed to understand the labour undertaken. Their specific embodiments of behaviour sometimes are constituted when dress codes are scripted for audiences which include managers, co-workers, customers and others. This performance is conceptualized as staged with an 'on' stage and 'back stage' play, dramaturgical in the Goffmanesque tradition.

These sites are constantly shifting with management, co-worker, customer and are remembered, while at the same time the workers are coming together. They share their experiences about the customer, the engagements with management and this sharing makes them come together. This coming together then also affects the performance with management. Collectivization gives greater sense of maturity and solidarity which ensues in an assertive engagement with management of their dignity and entitlements. The focus of research has

moved to the subjuctivising forces of disciplinary technologies . This resistance is informed by micro-politics and goes beyond performativity. These performances may be forgotten or ignored but the micro-politics and its relational aspect cannot be forgotten. Resistance must be articulated within the existing discourses.

Through the prisons of subjugation, the resistance itself is terrifying for the worker and there is an environment of subjugation that has created an ecosystem to enforce it. The policies and practices are reducing the space for resistance by being demonized as 'terrorism' as a union action was depicted by the head of an airline organization in the midst of a strike action (Joseph 2010). Alongside collective bargaining and strikes, workers would have to find new sets of agency 'repertoires'- a set of claim making routines (Tilly 2008) - to supplement their efforts.

'Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic'(Foucault 1980). Through the human geography lens, resistance is seen in the power relations involved in the production of space (Harvey 1993). Class analysis, 'Agitate', 'Educate', 'Organize', strikes, factory tools down, lightning action founded on old style labour relations is faced with the problem that the working class can no longer see itself as working class but instead as hijacked by other issues like climate change, gender rights. Castell evokes the three axes - welfare, communities and state- the communities of resistance have to act in the spaces defined by the state. It is argued that resistance can only be on terms defined by structures of power, public, overt and collective. These assume that there are no places outside of power relations to resist/oppose the injustices of oppression.

In conclusion, three main approaches to resistance have been profiled - the industrial relations perspective, the Labour Process theorising and the post-structuralist perspective along with the

Lacanian/Zizekenian theory and the Human Geography lens expanding the ways in which resistance has been explored. The industrial relations approach has focused on trade unions and its adversarial relationship with management with strikes and collective bargaining studies in contexts as varied as mining (Allen,1994) and aerospace (Danford et.al 2004). Resistance is to protect working conditions, seen through the institutions of trade unions and their mobilizations in response to Taylorism (McCabe et al 2019). These could be 'teamwork briefings' (Beale 2003) which were seen controlling workers right to determine her work, or 'flight scheduling' which was to protect against exposure to an epidemic (Rai 2008) and controls over collective bargaining (Raju 2007). With its focus on organized workers resistance and the decline of trade unions (Tapia et.al 2015) it has neglected resistance in other contexts which are informal or unorganized in the context of the restricted spaces for resistance. It has also neglected to address the subjectivity of not only the workers but also of other actors like the trade union leadership. Resistance has many meanings and diverse articulations.

Table 3-1 *Overview of Perspectives on resistance*

Perspective	Focus	Rationale	Form	Practices	Level	Studies
Industrial Relations	Management - Union Conflict; Struggles;	Threat to Workers interests and balance of power between management & workers	Formal; Overt	Strikes, Work to rule, Lightening action, Picketing, Court cases	Collective	Beale et.al 2003; Danfort 2004; Rai 2004; Kelly & Kelly 1991 ; Hyman 1989;Hill 2009
Labour Process Theory	Structural Relations , Workplace Inequality; Action;	Need for autonomy; reduce exploitation; evade control	Informal; Covert; Routine	Making out'; 'Fiddles'	Collective & Individual	Buroway 1982; Barney & Kunda 1992; Rubin 1996; Tretheway 1997;
Foucault/ Post Structuralist	Struggles at the level of subjectivities; Counter Discourses	Protection against colonizing forces and extant subject conditions	Informal; Covert; Routine	Distancing; Cynicism; surface acting; Micro-politics; dispositve	Individual & Collective	Knights & Vurdubarkis 1994; Prasad & Prasad 1998; Scott 1985;1994; Thomas & Davis 2005; Fleming & Spicer 2003,2007; Raffinsoe et.al 2016; Knights and McCabe 2016
Žižekian-Lacanian theory	Identity construction(Actor -Agency) ; Harmless	Address the feeling of lack	Informal; covert	'decaf resistance'; Ideological fantacy;cynical subject	Individual	Žižek, 2003, 2004, 2010; Gabriel, 1995, 1997; Contu and Willmott, 2006; du Plessis, 2015;
Human Geography	Socio-Spatial reconfiguring Transforming spaces; Action & Subjectivity	Meaningfulness of place;	Overt, formal & Informal; Routine	Transgression of space; occupying; transcribing its use		Lefebvre 1991;Harvey 1993; Herold 2014; Daskalaki, M., & Kokkinidis, G. 2017; Courpasson, Dany, & Delbridge, 2017; Fernández, Martí, & Farchi, 2017; Wainwright 2007;

Source: Researchers Own Compilation

Deriving from Marx and energised by Baverman (1974) labour process theorists focus on the structural antagonism in the employment relationship (Ackroyd and Thompson 1999). As the worker only sells the capacity of work thus this 'labour power' is indeterminate and gives the worker the potential to resist management discourse. The acts of resistance could be collective or in individual 'fragmented ways' (Delbridge 1995) especially where union influence is negligible or absent. These acts can also be directed towards other workers not necessarily the managers. In another study which was set in a tightly controlled environment, a small group of workers attempted to form a trade union (Bain & Taylor 2000), the employees engaged in 'productive' resistance (Courpasson et.al 2012) which was aimed at pressuring the management to remedy the situation. The labour process theorist looked at resistance beyond the union-management relations but rejected the notion of subjectivity which is akin to identity as

espoused by the post-structuralists. This limitation along with its narrow focus on workers acts of resistance ignores the other actors and forms which go beyond traditional worker management dichotomy (Russell and McCabe 2015)

The post-structuralist lens looks at resistance as both individual and collective, overt & covert, informal & formal and at the level of subjectivities and action (Karreman & Alvesson 2009). It addresses resistance at the level of subjectivities (Merilianen et.al 2004) with the workers identification with the varied bases which form her identity which resist subversion of management control at the point of on-going subjugation. Questioning the repressed subject through Foucault's notion of power/knowledge and its constraint on resistance and its forms (Scott 1989) it looks at both resistance and control as multidimensional (Fleming & Spicer 2008). Foucault (1978) in a much quoted argument articulated, "*Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power'.* Its forms may be cynicism or humour (Collinson 1994) and may be motivated by the subjugating pressures (Knights and Willmott 1989) and interlinked with other contested concepts of bio-politics (Johansson and Vinthangen 2019). It has explored new forms of management in public spaces and 'subversion and re-inscription of dominant discourses' (Thomas and Davis 2005) and more recently has alluded to what is conceptualized as 'subversive readiness' (Fleming 2013). This perspective adds complexity to the understanding of resistance; though criticised as being 'decaffeinated' (Contu 2008), it questions this as well as if it is by design. As control and subversion takes the form of colonizing the subject, it offers a philosophical perspective through which to analyse and understand resistance in its collectivist and individualised forms

3.3 Embodiments Of Mobile Work And Worker

Politics of identity is politics of space (Massey1996)

The 'production, reproduction and reconfiguration of space' is the contemporary form of globalisation (Harvey 2001b), with the resultant reduction of the importance of time and distance, the 'annihilation of space through time' as Marx puts it. The speed, ease and the commonplace routine that travel is now, has shrunk distances (Massey 1999). The insatiable advance of capitalism meant that movement to ease geographical expansion aided by the technological march to get its 'spatial fix' (Harvey 1985) was essential for its survival. The transport networks of road, rail, air and sea underwent major innovations for this to occur. Globalisation is produced though these activities with airline expansion and associated infrastructure to support its advance. Amongst this, aviation work and its workers have experienced the effects and its resultant changes to their work as space gets increasingly 'shrunk' by the ability to move across at higher speeds.

Though the space of work and nature of work have been studied, the introduction of these new mobile work forms has attracted numerous studies as disparate as from the lens of architecture (Penn 2004), to ICT (Kakihara and Sorenson 2004). Work encompasses time, space, movement and/or a combination of all these. Elucidating 'Mobile Work' is tumultuous as it leans on the still being uncovered understanding of knowledge, place and movement (Wood et.al 2016) but there is more consensus on the understanding that workplace influences the informal, commonplace learnings. Thus in mobile work, materiality and discourses create the norms which guide the subjectivities and meaning making of the workers. This has been explored

through communications technology (Ellis et al 1991), through temporality, through spatiality (Lefebvre1991) and through mobility (Urry 2007, Cresswell 2010,2006).

Where the 'abstraction of space' with its notions of domination and appropriation of workspace though its relationship with power (Lefebrve 1991) provides the mobile worker with meaning making, the 'flows' make place insignificant (Castells1996). The mobile worker has to assemble and reassemble the workplace (Felstead 2005) .The initial studies did not engage with the concept of mobile work with the lens of the labour process and the worker (Cohen 2010). Their focus was on 'telework' linking mobility and technology, namely ICT, which liberated work from the office-official space and brought it to the workers home or elsewhere. With globalization came the need to interact with anybody independent of the location and its aspects of time and space (Wiberg and Ljungberg 2001, Preece 1994) which realised Kleinrock's (1996, 1998) claims of a vision with support of technology. This vision envisaged 'anytime-anywhere' where the work can be transacted from a 'hotdesker' (Brown and O'Hara 2003) where the worker has no fixed desk or location or as a 'nomad' (Dhalbom, 1998, Czarniawska 2014) who can change workplaces, some to 'return home', others not. This movement impairs workers link with historical social structures of organizations along with their attachment to organizational culture and self-identity (Bean & Eisenberg, 2006). There has been a preoccupation with mobilities and technology however as Kesselring (2015) has articulated, there are many jobs that despite being mobile do not depend on portable devices to execute the task.

Put simply being mobile referred to some sense of geographical movement, to move away from one place to another towards a certain point (Lilischikis, 2003). This ignores the

transformations that happen with mobility of people, objects and structures. This narrow understanding led to mobile work as being understood as remote work (Kakihara and Sorensen 2004). Taking your work everywhere as 'global nomads' due to the technological and ICT enabled freedom confined the understanding to the 'corporeal' part. On the one hand technological communications made it possible to ignore the constraints of distance, on the other, people travelled more for work (Wiberg and Ljungberg 2001) -the 'global village' versus increased mobility. In order to understand this dichotomy, the concepts of 'Anytime Anywhere' work with dependencies and independencies of time and space was explored (M. Ellis et al 1991) revealing that work was dependent on either time or space or both. Thus, 'Anytime, Anywhere' was a possibility to a category of work but largely all work was time or place dependent (Wiberg and F. Ljungberg 2001). Studies have since then brought in other variables such as remoteness where in you are not truly mobile only away from a "home base' as opposed to when you are both remote and in motion which is being 'truly' mobile (Sherry and Salvador 2002). The level of detachedness from the workplace and the requirement to move was categorised along five types of mobile work such as 'on-site movers', 'yo-yos' and 'carriers' who work on the move, but ICT was again the vehicle on which this mobile work rode (Lilischikis 2003). Mobile work could be a requirement due to a constraint or a choice of the worker which would then affect the space of home which is being utilised as a workspace (Felstead 2002), thus bringing mobile work and space into the work-life balance studies.

The relationship of mobility to the accomplishment of a task varies with the objectives. For these motion or work necessitates movement to achieve or work may be accomplished anywhere, whether moving or in multiple places or in one place, thus being multilocational

with the support of mobile devices. This leads to '*Mobility while work'* in which place is of little importance with the global organizations and global urban systems (Harvey 1989) necessitating a 'flow of workers'. This includes telework, a type of work done with the support of laptops, tablets, mobile phones and other portable ICT, at a range of locations which are not the office or the home of the worker (Daniels, 2001 et al.). It has been explored in many studies as its prevalence increased with use of technology and ICT in organizations (Lilischikis, 2003; Bosch- Sijtsema et al., 2010, Felstand 2005). The challenges it faced were isolation, challenges of logistics of movement sometimes leading to a 'Jazz Like' quality of managing multiple flows (Sherry and Salvador 2001) and the blurring of work-home boundaries (Kaufmann,2002; Daniel et al., 200)

Mobility for work in which the place of work is immovable but inconstant, which is differentiated from the teleworker who is doing the task as it is place independent, has also lately been explored with the parallel increase in gig workers who take their work with them to multi locations and perform is at the customer/client site such as mobile hairdressers (Cohen 2010) and domiciliary (Wibberley 2013), repair workers (Wood et al. 2016), the body workers (Wolkowitz 2006) who require physical co-presence with client. To build trust and sharing difficult to code tacit knowledge, face to face meetings are a need with current and prospective business partners and thus the reality of business travellers. The knowledge mobile workers amongst them have control over their schedules and location with the coordination as challenging (Laurier 2001,Brown and O'Hara 2003), while blue-collared worker roles are dictated by the need of clients (Wibberley 2013).

'*Mobility as work*', in which the movement of people or things from one place to another is the task objective, is mostly seen through the transportation lens. This movement attracts not only the work of moving but ancillary work which enables and enhances the travel, especially when moving people (Cohen 2010).

Table 3-2 Typologies of Work Related Mobility Frames

Basis	Categories	Author	Site	Definition
Time ,Place and Task	Anytime Anywhere	Wiberg & Ljungbrd 2001	Mobile Telecom Technicians	moving from terms as distributed and co-located..
	Anytime Particular Place			
	Particular Time Any Place			
	Particular Time Particular Place			
Choice and Constraint	Spatial Location of Work	Felstad 2002;Gren 2002	Work From home	Away from workplace
Level of Detachness from Workplace(Number and frequency of changing of locations	On site	Lilischikis 2003	ICT	Work implying to move between different locations
	YoYo			
	Pendulums			
	Nomad			
	Carriers			
Accomplishment of Task	Mobile for Work	Cohen et al 2010	Mobile Hairdressers	Movement to facilitate work
	Mobility as Work			
	Mobility while Work			
Number of total places and novel p	Commuter	Wickam & Veechi 2010	Business Travellers	Travelling to places for Work
	Explorer			
	Nomad			
Length of time away from home	Eight Types baed on duration	Miller & Salt 2008	Professional Workers	Travelling for indicriminate period of time
Mode & distance	Balance of location requiments	Hislop 2016	TeleWorkers	Pure' Who never works from home or employers Office, to 'hybrid'who balances location

Studies implicating technology, both in the use of work and around work, have been fairly explored but there is work which is mobile and does not depend on mobile devices or network and is necessitated by proximity and distance (Kesselring 2015) such as cabin attendants and pilots of airlines. There have been notable exceptions to the paucity of studies of this category of mobile workers (Knox et.al 2000; Jensen and Vannini 2016; Adey et.al 2007,2012) with the focus instead being on mobility itself and the experiences of air travellers. Mobile is not only about the concept of travel but also about the performed interactions in a social setting

(Kakihara and Sorensen 2002). Mobile occupations with their range of practices encompass experiences of space through movement while all the time exposing the constitution and reconstitution of the workplace. Working while mobile has been studied as a knowledge about the 'white collared', other occupations of a mobile kind have been 'omitted' (Cohen 2010). *'Transportation is central to the study of geography, just as geography is central to the study of transportation'* (Goetz 2006).

In the theoretical frameworks which have informed the studies of mobile work, 'mobilities turn' (Sheller and Urry 2006) is the growing focus on the economic-social world being propelled by movement and flow informed by a 'networked' life (Hannam et.al 2006, Konx et al 2008). 'Mobilities' refers to a social science which conceptualised all movement whether blocked or potential, voluntary , temporary place making, as representative of the political, economic and social relations. The mobilities paradigm provided a theoretical framework to understand not only the spatial rootedness but the movement and the interplay of the stillness with it. The five mobilities that Urry (2007) proposed were the following practices - the corporeal travel of people; movement of objects; imaginative travel; virtual travel; communications, both analogue and digital. It is not a simple fact of travel but of the 'contested world of meanings and power' (Cresswell 2006).

Mobility as an actual practice of moving through space and time (Jansen 2006) draws on sociological traditions (Edensor 2000, Urry 2000, Kaufman 2002) with leading traditional socio-spatial theorists limiting themselves to the physicality and the materiality of space with its' illusions of transparency and opaqueness' (Lefebvre 1991, Soja 1989) and the inherently

embodied experience (Harvey 1990). Lefebvre's (1974,1991) *La production de l'espace (The production of space)* is an influential work which has viewed through overlapping aspects-spatial practice, representational space and representations of space (Dale 2005) and has guided human geographical research. Others have challenged previously held conceptions of space. Others have contributed to the new conceptualizations of space through radical Marxist traditions (Harvey 1973), critical labour process objective (Urry 2002, Tolia-Kelly 2010, Jensen 2014), cultural theory (Duncan 1996), time-space destanciation (Giddens 1984) and improving the world (Soja 1996). The materiality of space are reflected in the spatial practices and embodied subjectivities. *'Space is produced by the social relations that it also reproduces, mediates and responds'* (Natter and Jones III,1991)

Space however was not seen in this way always. Initially focused on the Euclidian geometry, which suggests space is the distance between two or more points, which could be the walls, two buildings, resources, customers as such. Measuring distance, these studies understood the influence of distance from resources for organizations (Lorsh 1954), office layouts and its effect on workplace behaviour with open plans which improve creativity (Duffy 1997) but decrease satisfaction (Sundstrom 1980), creation of social networks which have benefits such as clustering of 'star scientists' (Zucker et.al 1998), access to sophisticated customers (Pandit and Cooke 2003) to even friendships (Festinger et.al 1950) and marriage (Bossard 1932). This approach gives sense to organizational activity and employee behaviour (Taylor and Spicer 2007) but was inadequate to give an account of the ways in which this space is given meaning (Halford 2004) , ignoring the role of perceptions and experiences have in making sense of distance (Merleau-Ponty 1962) and not being able to explain how spatiality is practised with

its contradictions and ambiguities which create spaces for resistance (Harvey 1973,1990; Taylor and Spicer 2007).

Space as materialization of power relations – formed mostly by Marxian ideology - though criticized, has been useful to understand critical space (Harvey 1989). Analysing Lefebvre though Foucault (1977), space is seen as an enclosure - a defined space, partitioning it enables location of individuals to facilitate communication as well as to prevent others from being communicated. It keeps the movements controlled and visible. The spatial positioning of the workspaces acts like a Panopticon, where the gaze is always on the worker. These sites of control create new negotiations of boundaries of work and non-work. Increasingly blurred, in this boundaryless organization, the worker is to bring her emotions and sentiments usually associated with non-work to workspaces and take the work related behaviour home(Fleming and Spicer2004, Hochschild 1983). These disembodied spirits are as if severed from their social ties which bind them in one place – a functional site - where grouped into similar operations they are supervised both generally and individually. The hierarchy of knowledge is arranged in space, these '*dispositifs'* of power (Hofbauer 2000) are both symbolic of office space and used in construction of the subjected embodied experience of the worker. The factory towns extend this surveillance to the lives of the workers while inscribing the very spaces with socio-economic conditions of production (Veninga 2004) and surveillance ensuring that whole communities are under the 'absolute rule' of the employer (Burrell 1997). Recent studies have extended this leakage of work norms to non-work spaces in Silicon Valley (English-Leuck 2000) and business parks (2000). In pursuit of an appropriately behaved employee, spontaneity is replaced by norms (Bauman 1997) which are strictly monitored through the use of building

structures which enable visual control (Thompson 1977) and in addition, technology is also enabled in virtual work to do this surveillance. Architects create an 'organizational design' which directs towards preordered scripts (Kornberger and Clegg 2004), embodying the buildings to the ideals and norms of the employers not only in the aesthetics but also in the metaphors they evoke (Morgan 2004). The spatial positioning of the workspaces too acts like a Panopticon, where the gaze is always on the worker. The body is the canvas on which the organizational discourses are painted. These sites of control create new negotiations of boundaries of work and non-work. These disembodied spirits are as if severed from their social ties which bind them in one place. Flight crews are watched all the time during work and outside of active work, not necessarily by managers but by passengers, fellow workers, bystanders and though constant surveillance by the authorities. Their behaviour is specific and even emotions are moderated (Hochschild 1983) .

Despite the dogged approach of surveillance, these can be easily resisted (Collinson and Collinson 1997). Organizations have exercised control more through internalization by the worker though the practice of performance management (Townley 1994), enterprising self and cultural management. However, still deviance from this occurs as workers find fissures through which they reconstitute its use. '*Practised space can be quite different from planned space'* (De Clerteau 1984). This, however, ignores the space seen through the ongoing experiences of the worker who co-create space as the materiality of space. It also sidesteps the lived experiences of the worker in favour of strict categories limited by the managerial intentions which in a way define the scope of workers actions.

The central strategy of authority is to force people to play its game, and to play the game by these rules, people create space to circumvent the rules. They play two games, one that the powerful want and the other, below their noses. The other approach is to see beyond these structures, into the fissures, where power relations are incomplete, ambiguous, liable to rupture—thus having places partially connected but also partially disconnected from domination of power - in the pleasures, fears, hopes, dark, deliberately hidden, saturated with memories, in the space dislocated from the powerful, dynamic, multiple and also weak (both in effectiveness and also because of reprisals) at the level of subjectivities, through their intended and received meanings. Seen through the interpretations and experiences of the worker (Gieryn 2002) and her use of space, using mostly an interpretive lens, studies have focused on the stories that space tells (Yanow 1995, 1998). Lefebvre's representational space, "space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols" (1991) is relevant in organizations as new forms of control relies more on the manipulations of discourse, identity and culture (Dale 2004) as control is obscured but also chosen by the worker (Burawoy,1979). Foucault connects this spatial power to the human body and its individual subjectivities as *bio-politics*. This embodied power leads to the production of self through the process of self-discipline and normalization, which is the construction of an idealised form of conduct. Deviation from this ideal is thus punished or rewarded, thus producing a docile body which can be optimised, calculated and controlled. The body is the canvas on which the organizational discourses are painted. These sites of control create new negotiations of boundaries of work and non-work. These disembodied spirits are as if severed from their social ties which bind them in one place. Flight crew are watched all the time during work and outside of active work,

not necessarily by managers but by passengers, fellow workers, bystanders and though constant surveillance by the authorities. Their behaviour is specific and even emotions are moderated (Hochschild 1983) with the requirement of 'aesthetic labour' whereby the workers embody the organizational values (Alferoff and Knights,2003) which is part of the hegemonic project (Du Gay 1996)

As it embodies relations of power, inherent alongside the possibility of resistance, space 'must' be theorised and engaged in organizational space studies (Bell 2006). Our experiences of organizations is built up of our own individual habituated ways of engaging our bodies with certain materiality along with our conscious or unconscious knowledge of inherent spatial relations. This spatial practice produces the meaning of the organizational space using alongside 'horizontal', the 'deep' forms of control to engage with the individuals sense of self and identity and how they experience the world around them (Dale 2005). It has also been seen through the dichotomy of representation of space which is the conceived space , a deliberate concept to embody and thus lead to manipulation of space to appropriate employee identity. It is also seen as representational space or lived space where the imaginary, where signs and symbols gain materiality (Lefebvre 1991). This approach does not see space as fixed but as 'spatial rootedness but from the lens of movement (Urry 2007). The space embodies power relations within which the possibility of resistance stays (Betts 2006). Thus, space has been approached objectively as though it is the materiality of its planning and its effects (Elsback and Pratt 2007), through the experiences of individuals and their subjective interpretations (Marlin 2002, Tuan 1977) and the post-structuralist lens.

Thus, though mobile work is explored through mobility studies and space though spatiality, the direct representations and experiences of movement remain less (Keeling 2007, 2008, 2009) with notable exceptions studying travel space (Jain 2011) from passengers perspective. There have been no studies which have engaged with the experiences of the mobile worker as she reconstitutes the workplace in the embodied movement of work through time, proximity and distance. This thesis adopts its focus on power, its production and reproduction and the normative control at the level of subjectivities (Clegg and Kornberger 2006; Dale and Burrel 2008), but it also acknowledges the spatial boundaries in which the enactment of the subject positions are 'performed, enacted and even resisted' (Jensen 2013), not seeing it as 'background scenery' (Harold, Peck and Wills 2001) but the constitutive element in the workers struggle to transform meaning at the point of ongoing subjugation

3.4 Conclusion

"We need to know how to account for agency, resistance, subjectivity, and movement or event in the face of totalizing fixities or hegemonic structures without constructing narratives of oppositional binaries." Caren Kaplan (1996). Though studied extensively, resistance has not been studied in the context of mobile work in which this study is situated which explores not only the practices of power relations, the contestation of identities and subjectivities but also the spaces where this resistance emerges though its embodiments in the worker and though the temporalities in which it is organized where time is the notable dimension. This study would be conceptualising resistance based on Thomas and Davies (2005) definition that it is the "constant process of adaptation, subversion and re-inscription of dominant discourses",

resistance in the everyday practices where people can create their own ways of living - their own meanings and practices - thus it can be found in everything in the context in which it takes place. Its meaning is best understood in the context it operates as it is a situated, social practice (Prasad & Prasad 2000, McCabe et.al 2019), and as such it should be studied in relation to the places it happens (Courpasson and Vallas 2016, Juris 2008). Aviation has been studied in transportation studies extensively however, there are limited understanding of how the worker experiences, organizes and re-organizes space. It is argued that the airline consists of flows (Thrift 2007) and spaces thus are not rigid but mutually constituted through performance of the workers in an attempt to re-inscribe meanings to their social and spatial relations at the point of on-going subjugation.

4 Chapter 4: Design and Methodology

4.1 Overview

Facts rarely speak for themselves – and never in isolation. Narratives and stories enable us to make sense of them, to identify their significance, and even, when they are painful or unpleasant, to accept them and live with them (Gabriel 2004). This chapter discusses the theoretical basis of the qualitative research approach, which has been deemed suitable for this study. This research privileges post structuralist lens for accessing data on performance of collectivization in mobile work and the organizational discourses that discipline the employees and are resisted by them. It further investigates the argument behind collecting data from operating crew at two discursive sites- cabin crew and pilots, through the method of observations and free flowing unstructured and semi structured interviews. Further, it directs to the research questions around which the analytical explorations of this study are carried out.

In conclusion, it describes the methodology proposed, which relies on the plurality not the singular, reductionist approach (Battisti & Eiselen 2008).

In recent years ,contemporary industrial relations has been pre-dominantly applying statistical techniques without the two core concepts of pure science research being adhered to, the ability to control the environment and the ability to measure certain variables (Plowman, 1991, Connel, Lynch & Waring 2001). Although there are advantages to this deductive approach as certain behaviours can be causally identified by holding certain hypothesis, it is limited when it is impossible to specify precise, logical bases for most of the interesting relationships (Capelli, 1985). Thus, the concern that theories may be pulled out of a hat , has led researchers to approach industrial relations from a social science framework.

According to Lincoln and Guba the purpose of a qualitative study is to 'accumulate sufficient knowledge to lead to understanding' (1985). Merriam (1998) outlines several characteristics of all qualitative research that help to clarify important elements of this form of inquiry. First, the key concern of qualitative inquiry is to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon from the perspective of the participant. This insider perspective, or 'emic', is in contrast to the 'etic', or outsider view. A second characteristic involves the role of the researcher as the primary instrument for collecting and analysing data. The researcher as an instrument can be differentiated from other forms of data collection instruments for the researcher is responsive to the context; he or she can adapt techniques to the circumstances; the total context can be considered; what is known about the situation can be expanded through sensitivity to nonverbal aspects; the researcher can process data immediately, can clarify and summarize as the study evolves, and can explore anomalous responses. (Merriam,1998). Thirdly, qualitative research

typically involves some form of fieldwork. For this research project, the fieldwork consisted of unstructured interviews with participants along with observations at their work sites. Fourthly, strategies employed are primarily of an inductive nature with a focus on building abstractions, concepts, or hypotheses and theories. And lastly, the focus of qualitative research is on "process, meaning, and understanding" (Merriam, 1998) that produces a rich and descriptive analysis. The use of an emergent research design is recommended (Lincoln & Guba 1985), which means that data collection and data analysis are simultaneous and ongoing activities that allow for important understandings to be discovered along the way and then pursued in additional data collection efforts. Therefore, this approach sheds light on the theoretical aspects to justify the research question of this study.

4.2 Research Approach With Post Structural Lens

Qualitative research is interpretive and thus guided by the researcher's beliefs and understandings of the world. The interpretive paradigm that guided my qualitative research was post structural that takes a non-essentialist view, recognizing the possibility of multiple identities and the possibility of changing identities within different contexts. This perspective considers the social construction of identity and subjectivity to be influenced by other social realities like gender, race, class, and sexual orientation (Flannery, 2000). Personal agency is also a significant characteristic from a nonessentialist perspective for it is believed that "identity can be both constructed and chosen" (Flannery, 2000). '*How is it that they (discourses) have come to be seen as true at this particular time?* (Harcourt 2007). Poststructuralist research practices do not look to identifying participant responses that can be seen to give rise to essentialist or uniquely privileged accounts that discover "the truth" of a

situation. Instead, emphasis is placed on identifying meanings that are context specific and that relate to the varying discursive practices operating. When considering views of the self, poststructuralist orientation rejects the idea of an essential or core self that remains the same in all situations. In contrast, emphasis is placed on decentred subjects, where subjectivity is regarded as changing, complex, and contradictory entity. It is not imposed externally but a position we occupy that our socio-cultural context has made available to usIt is always influenced by social relational as well as by biographical forces and by discursively constituted experiences. Rather than striving for internal consistency or an essential subjectivity through adopting a single, unitary identity, an individual can contain multiple, shifting and often contradictory identities, or subject positions Weedon (1987). This provides an opportunity for the subject to change and re-inscribe meanings and also refusing the ones ascribed to her. Following Foucault (1982) to understand the normalising discourses, power has to be analysed first from the different forms of resistance , "*it consists of analyzing power relations through the antagonism of strategies".* As social phenomenon will always have meanings, and the task of social science is not to explain but understand it. Meanings emerge only through discourse, as a consequence of displacements along a signifying chain. Post-structural analysts are bothered with detailed texts and what constitutes text is also broadly defined (Augustine 2014). The analytical process informed by post structuralism produces varied readings and understandings of the text. The participants experiences are expressed through these readings in recurring themes and identification of patterns. Contradictions as well as the avoidances, inconsistencies and absences are emphasised (Augustine 2014).What is unsaid is seen as rich

as what is said in the text (Given 2008) with the researcher engages with it though an ongoing interpretive process, reflecting on her own understandings and becoming more aware of them. Lyotard (1984) observes that narrative knowledge represents the ordinary, everyday lives of people, discursive resources that they employ to make sense of their lives. Social data itself can be thought as a constituent of a complex web of narratives, as they intersect with each other, come into conflict with each other, and still attempt to make some form of consensual sense together (MacIntyre, 1990). These narrative intersections could also follow many dramaturgical and theatrical conventions and dramaturgical tropes could provide important clues for interpreting social data (Burke, 1969; Simhoni, 2008). Foucault argues that it is important to consider the workings at the level of ongoing subjugations that how things work at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which govern our bodies, govern our gestures, and dictate our behaviors (1980). The study acknowledges that method can generate and shape theory, just as theory can generate and shape method. There is a back-and-forth character in which concepts, conjectures, and data are in continuous interpretation (Van Maanen et.al 2007).

Poststructuralism lens calls for critiques of any situation or process as a means of looking at these events in a different way. It also determines to see new possibilities from what was once considered as “natural”. Foucault (1994) explains that this requires exploration of how things have evolved in ways that are historically intelligible, but not essential. " We must make the intelligible appear against a backdrop of emptiness and deny its necessity. We must think that what exists is far from filling all spaces. To make a truly unavoidable challenge of the question: What can be played?” (Foucault, 1994).

Relying on participants' view of situation and deriving meanings from deeper interactions or insightful discussions with other people require the researcher to be aware as to how interpretation will flow from her own background, the personal, cultural and historical experiences (Creswell, 2003). The researcher is a stranger, a colleague, a fellow flying crew, a trade unionist, sometimes many of these together, at others just the one. The interactions with the participants are infused with these and create a trusting enclosure where the articulation of the experiences of the participants unfolds. This unique position contributes to the rich, detailed conversations and the 'baring of the soul' of the participants. Sense-making comprises of the ability to access the meanings of event in terms of the different narratives, in which these events could situate themselves (Weick, 1995). Moreover, the researcher was also aware that the interviewer- interviewee relationship provided this environment where knowledge was interactively constructed (Willims & Heikes 1993).

4.3 Site Or Respondent Selection

This study adopts the approach as suggested by Merriam (2002) in which the researcher first approaches participants from whom she could substantially learn from (Polkinghorne 2002) and one who were 'information rich cases' (Patton 1990). According to Merriam (2002) "To begin with, since you're not interested in 'how much' or 'how often,' random sampling makes little sense. Instead, since qualitative inquiry seeks to understand the meaning of a phenomenon from the perspectives of the participants. it is important to select a sample from which most can be learned. This is called a purposive or purposeful sample.

For the enquiry of research questions, two discursive sites were chosen. These consisted of the Pilots (Executives, Commanders and First Officers) and Cabin Crew (Executive, Pursers, Air Hostess and Flight Attendants) of various Indian commercial airlines operating in India. The engagement with the site began in 1993 when I joined aviation and experienced the mobility which has characterised the lives of the workers. In 2012 I re-entered this space, now as a researcher and a participant observer, to understand the longest employee strike in aviation history. These interactions informed my research proposal and also lend themselves to identification of the two discursive sites. Thus being an ex-operating crew and a co -worker for many of the prospective participants I was able to reach out to the community of airline employees. The researcher approached union activists and office bearers as well as outspoken employees who were well regarded in the community as a representative of their voice. These contacts directed the researcher to other participants who were approached through snowball sampling- where initial informants are identified and the subsequent sample is built by asking for key recommendations from these informants (Newing 2010).The researcher engaged with the informants as the collection began and though unconnected at first, as the understanding of data began and broad themes emerged, the sampling strategy moved to theoretical sampling to reach those who would aid the understanding or corroborate, validate or extend the emerging theory (Morse 2015, Patten 2017), amongst the participants suggested through snowball sampling. As the participants speak not only of their experiences but also of others, qualitative data is thus never only about the experiences of the participants, it goes beyond the “number of participants” (Morse 2008) emphasis as in original). Thus as no new data was emerging from the interviews, data saturation was achieved therefore adding of further participants was

ceased (Patten 2017, Guest, Bunce & Johnson 2006).Overview of the fieldwork is detailed in Appendix F.

The researcher herself being an ex-member of this community was able to connect with more than hundred operating crew from various cities in India. These people were approached via texts., telephone calls and emails and based on the availability, 72 among them agreed to be part of the study. However, later few of them opted out due to flying schedules, job shifts to other countries and personal reasons, and 61 operating crew members agreed to be interviewed. Data size in qualitative research from an interpretivist approach guided the researcher (Onwuegbuzie & Leech 2005; Boddy 2005) with most studies using around 30 participants. Although 61 members showed interest , few opted out from becoming part of this study later and were removed for reasons given as they had apprehensions of adverse action from current organization and future prospects . The researcher was thus able to interview 58 respondents including herself (the researcher being an ex-operating crew) and these have been used for this study. Studies in mobile work have employed very small samples comprising under 20 participants (Hislop and Axtel 2007; Perry et al.2001) , however 'saturation' required fewer cases due to the discursive sites which shared industry and occupation. The selection of participants and interviews conducted fulfilled the requirement of both data representation as well as objective of the study (Polkinghorne ,2005)

This further sufficiently brings richness, clarity, refinement and understanding to the experience under study (Polkinghourne, 2002). Thus, though care was taken to ensure representation from the population and such diversity in age, gender, experience and job roles - both executive (Managerial) and non-managerial (Workman) categories - was attempted

(Marshall et al 2013, Trotter 2012, Bock and Sergeant 2002), the foremost underlying objective was to interview participants who could add with richness of their experience. Pseudonyms are used to protect identities of the respondents and the table below provides a distribution of the participants. A detailed table is appended in the Appendix G.

Table 4-1

Category	Discursive Sites	Pilots	Cabin Crew	Total
Occupation & Role	Executive	10	03	13
	Workman	6	37	43
	Union Leader	01	01	02
	Total	17	41	58
Gender	Male	11	20	31
	Female	06	21	27
	Total	17	41	58
Age	21-35	2	08	10
	36-50	7	23	30
	51-65	8	10	18
	Total	17	41	58
Trade Union Membership	Current	3	25	28
	Former	13	3	16
	Never	0	3	03
	Office Bearer	3	8	11
	Total	17	41	58
Caregiver	Children/ Parents	14	24	38
	None	4	16	20
	Total	17	39	58
Marital Status	Married	13	27	40
	Single/Divorced	04	14	18
	Total	17	41	58

4.4 Data Collection

The approach of the study is rooted on interpretivist (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, Mertens, 2010) and the researcher relied on the participants' view of the situation. Participants develop

subjective meanings of their experiences which are varied and multiple. Thus the researcher has to look for the complexity of the views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories. As these meanings are negotiated both socially and historically thus forming through interactions with others, the researcher has reflected her role in the interview process. This study explored these meanings through both primary and secondary data sources that included unstructured and semi-structured interviews, spontaneous conversations, semi participant observations, historical reports, court judgements and official documents.

When the participants views are to be dwelled deeper, then the interview is a more robust form (Kvale, 1996; 2003). The study aimed at exploring the subjective experiences of the participants as well as negotiate meanings in more natural settings interviewing became "a valuable method for exploring the construction and negotiation of meanings in a natural setting" (Cohen et al 2007: 29). The semi-structured interviews allowed respondents to tell their story and provide access to respondents' subjective definitions, sense-making and experiences of social life- especially when the research questions case difficulty or introspection (Schwalbe & Wolkomic 2001). The goal of the interview was to create the conditions to encourage the participants to talk comfortably about the research focus of normalizations of & resistance to organizational discourses, in their own terms (Spillane 1999). To address these, the following steps were taken during the interview process (Taylor & Bodgen 1984). Participants were informed about the interests of the researcher in conducting of this research, the purpose of the study and assurance to keep identity confidential therefore Pseudonyms are used while representing respondents' profile. Further, selection of the time and place of the interview, whether it could be audio recorded or not, and decide the inclusion

or removal of their interview after sharing of transcripts/ data notes was also done basis the consent of each participant..

The researcher had multiple interactions with the participants which were first guided with an aim to build trust and inform them about this study. There are different types of interviews and the structured interview was not considered as its binary responses to pre-determined questions give little freedom to the interviewer and the interviewee (Berg 2007). This study has employed both unstructured and semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview which allowed the researcher to "probe and expand the interviewee's responses" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005:88) was used with a interview guide. Interview guide was created based on the research objectives and to explore the research questions of this study within its parameters (Berg 2007). The unstructured interview was also used which allowed flexibility and freedom to plan, implement and organize the interview both in terms of the manner of engagement as well as in terms of questions posed to the respondents (Gubrium and Holstein 2002).

Initially semi-structured interviews were held ranging from 45 minutes to 2 hours, often multiple times. These interviews were guided initially with an interview guide, however, the participants flow of conversations was impeded. Following a few interviews, the interview guide was modified to ensure the key questions addressed went along with the flow of the questions being answered. This helped to avoid pitfalls of following the interview guide closely as it inhibited the emergence of their narratives which did not follow a natural progression. Given this, few questions were added as the interview progressed not necessarily before it as the objective was to illuminate the social (Weiss 2004) and they reveal the emotional and social implications of organizational practices. Semi-structured interviews ask about the details of

what happened, what was done and said, what the respondent thought and felt. The aim then, is to come as close as possible to capturing in full the processes that led to an event or experience (Weiss 2004). The interview is a simulacrum, a perfectly miniature and coherent world in its own right (see Dillard, 1982). In the moment of story-telling, teller and listener, performer and audience, share the goal of participating in an experience which reveals their shared same-ness (Porter, 2000). It can be concluded that the interview functions "as a narrative device" that facilitates the sharing of stories from participants who are so inclined to tell stories about themselves" (Denzin 2011).

The interview's meanings are contextual, improvised and performative (Dillard, 1982). The interview is an active text, a site where meaning is created and performed. When performed, the interview text creates the world, giving the world its situated meaningfulness. From this perspective, the interview is a fabrication, a construction, a fiction, an 'ordering or rearrangement of selected materials from the actual world' (Dillard, 1982). But every interview text selectively and unsystematically reconstructs that world, tells and performs a story accordingly to its own version of narrative logic (Denzin 2001)

The researcher began with casual conversations, with the respondents often asking about her as well. As most of the respondents were known to the researcher as ex-colleagues or acquaintances she interacted with during her earlier stint in the trade union, the setting was informal. The participants sometimes invited her to their house for the interview, others came to the office of the researcher or to the trade union office. On occasions the participants met the researcher in coffee shops or the airport and inside the aircraft. In the start of the interview, she gave a brief overview of the study, elaborating on the rationale for it and asked them if she

could record and take notes of the interview. On most occasions the participants agreed for the recording and asked if the recording would be kept confidential. Some feared of reprisals and only agreed to note taking while the others gave documents to aid the researcher. Even the ones who agreed to recording wanted their names to be altered or protected. The interviews began by asking questions around the research objectives which are to understand the experience of the respondent and thus the opening question was 'Tell me about your work, your role and your experiences during your employment?'. It was broad and general so as to facilitate the participants to construct meanings (Creswell 2017). The broader questions were detailed in the interview guide that were referred while taking interviews but only to guide the probing as it progressed and not to hinder the conversation.

The initial interview guide which was aimed at developing questions exploring each of the research questions separately was amended as the interviews progressed and questions emerged were added, as new ones emerged or replaced the ones already present (Glesne 1999). Overall, this provided consistency in the interviews. The initial and the amended interview guide are provided in the annexure. The interviews did not always follow a linear storied progression and the participants shared experiences which may be linked to questions which had to come at a later stage of the interview. The narrative collage is not linear as time and space both collapse during interviews (Dillard 1982), as participants use these collapsed temporal movements to 'do' rather than 'tell' thus leading the way in which they want to construct their identities through the performance of the interview (Denzin 2001, Riessman 2005).

The field interviews conducted were audio recorded by the researcher for the participants who showed consent for the same and later transcribed . If not allowed, the researcher took notes

when the interactions were not impeded by it. The participants did not feel comfortable with another person taking notes or be involved in the interview, other than the researcher herself. These interactions took place as dictated by the participants, at their home, coffee shops or at researchers' home or office. Most of the interviews conducted were face to face or supplemented with follow up interviews on the phone. However, a few interviews took place exclusively on the phone for which the researcher ensured the flow and conversations around the objective of the study (Sturges, J. E., & Hanrahan, K. J. 2004). After each interaction, whether audio recorded or not, the researcher wrote memos of her own understanding of the interview, gestures, emotional cues which could add richness to the data and reflected on her thoughts and feelings as the vehicle of data gathering and interpretation. These memos were again supplemented with insights as the researcher engaged with the data.

Data collected from field interviews were also supported by secondary sources like newspaper reports, court rulings, organizational circulars/reports and other published material on Indian commercial airlines operating crew. Historical traditions that access recorded testimony in archives or through oral histories, contemporaneous or past, are well-used, tried and tested ways of understanding mobile lives and journeys as they are told as recollections, narratives or stories (Adey 2017). These data points were used to supplement the interview data to draw rich insights. Mobile methodologies have sought to juxtapose different research materials, from sounds and moving imagery with self-reflective and reflexive stance not merely to seek authenticity but to 'evoke encounters, animate experiences, enact mundane performances and generate the potential for action' (Vannini 2012).

The researcher undertook several flights on the airline of the respondents and had opportunity to observe and interact with the operating crew. The observations during the flight were consistently captured in the form of field notes that were later transferred to memos. These memos also supplemented the interview data thus behaviours, gestures, body tone, clothing (Polkinghorne 2005) added to giving meaning to the oral data.

The spontaneous conversations in the airports, inflight , at layover stations or before/after the formal interview continuously informed my understanding especially of the terminologies specific to aviation which had entered the domain post my separation from it. Details of the aviation terminology is appended in appendix H. It also gave better grounding of the personal subjectivities, the motivations, reasons, personal views of the participants towards the totalizing discourses of control, hegemony their responses to them (Ybema 2020).

Triangulation to achieve 'holistic and contextual' portrayal of the phenomenon rather than scalability, validity and convergent validation (Jick T.D 1979) has directed the various methods of data collection and the varied participants of the study (Polkinghorne 2005). Though the researcher was engaged in informal conversations with the participants throughout the study, the interviews were conducted in three phases across two years in winter and summer breaks and follow-up interactions have been conducted during the final analysis as well , details of the fieldwork are in Appendix F

4.5 Research Objective And Questions

The research objective is to access the enactment, performed collectivization and resistance of mobile workers as socially constructed concepts in the context of mobile work. The research

questions flowing from the conceptual and methodological underpinnings of the study a discussed so far that were explored are:

RQ 1. How do organizational discourses discipline the subjectivities of employees by constructing formalities of time, space and body?

RQ 2. How do employees' mobilize discourse and practices of collectivization to disrupt organizational Normality?

RQ 3. How does the performance of collectivization & resistance reconstitute contradictions subjectivities that defy and legitimize organizational control?

4.6 Data Analysis Procedures

'Narratives are essential to methods for mobilities'. Adey 2017

The researcher has extensively studied the widely used data analysis practices of scholars in the field of study and referred to a few for guiding the study. In recent studies, qualitative methods are specifically constructed to take account of the particular characteristics of human experience and to facilitate the investigation of experience(Polkinghorne 2005).

The various approaches to qualitative inquiry , namely narrative approach, grounded theory, phenomenology , ethnography and case studies (Cresswell & Poth 2017) were studied. In this study, narrative approach thorough a Post Structuralist lens guided the data analysis. Using a narrative approach, the analysis approached the interview data using paradigm thinking to create descriptions of themes that hold across the narratives. This "analysis of narratives" (Polkinghorne 1995) allows the researchers to use paradigmatic reasons for a narrative study, such as how individuals are enabled and constrained by social resources, socially situated in

interactive performances, and how narrators develop interpretations (Chase 2005). An attempt was made by the author to look at the data in different ways, wherein a critique and examination of researcher's own subjectivity and frame of reference was used. Reflexive methodology aided with systematic reflection, careful interpretation, awareness of the political aspects of research, including the 'politics of location' (Marcus 1994) and reflections on the problem of representation and authority as guided by Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) was applied. The researcher is aware that she cannot extricate herself from the data and its interpretation (Calas and Smircich 1992) and that her own worldview is intrinsically linked to the frameworks, paradigms & socio-political contexts of the research (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000, Calas and Smircich 1999). Data is an account of the experience of the participants as told or observed and then written in textual form by the researcher and with it the evidence is formed by the meanings represented in these texts (Polkinghorne 2005). As language is the form in which the data is presented, language expressions of stories and metaphors extend the meanings to a closer understanding of the context and the experience(Riccour 1981). 'Narratives do not mirror, they refract the past' (Reissman 2005) as participants construct their world not at 'truths' but make them meaningful to the audience and thus the narratives need organizing in terms of field notes, transcripts, memos and interpretations to be used as data.

The analysis in form of reflective memos started soon after the interviews were conducted, it stretched as the transcribed interviews were read and re-read and when theory was revisited. Following Augustine's (2014) approach, writing became the first analytic stance toward the data collected in this dissertation with analytical memos. The ongoing writing allowed the researcher to analyse data thus making connections, reviewing the questions to ask and relook

at theory for new associations (Augustine, 2014). Saldana (2014) describes analytic memos as a way to help the researcher document her reflections and thinking about the data, specifically code choices, emergent themes, and research questions.

Method can lead to analysis of surprising and expected data to generate new theoretical insights (Alvesson and Karemann 2007; Charles Sanders Peirce 1995/1903). The methodological rigor is maintained by attention to the reflexivity of the researcher, giving details of the analysis and presenting the different readings of the texts (Augustine 2014). Derrida's notion of difference speaks of the changing meanings associated with texts mirroring the changing social contexts, thus making all meaning making debateable (St.Pierre 2000) as different interpretations are possible (Battisti, M., & Eiselen, T. 2008). Moreover, as suggested by Gabriel (2004), "acts rarely speak for themselves – and never in isolation".

Thus, stories and narratives equip us to understand their significance and unravel the construction and contestation of their meanings (Gabriel 2004). Through these narratives the analysis was conducted with an aim to critically engage with the social relationships and practices (Augustine 2014). The central focus of the analysis and theoretical exploration was on how the organization creates normalising discourses and how the worker negotiates these through counter narratives.

To recover the themes which are embodied in the enigmatic aspects of the experience, the researcher involved herself in crafting the text. Themes, the core of the notion the research is attempting to understand, can be recovered through varied ways. Coding denies ambiguity, breaks the data into parts thus separating them into silos and encourages surface level aspects and the imaginative, luscious 'thick descriptions' are condensed (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) .

It was, thus, spurned in favour of 'intellectual curiosity, open-mindedness, willingness to reflect and challenge one's own and micro- tribes' assumptions and vocabulary'(Alvesson et.al 2017) when confronted with the mission of making sense of the data

The three approaches of uncovering themes as elucidated by Van Mannen (1998) are: a) holistic or sententious approach where we attend to the text as a whole and capture its fundamental meaning; b) Selective or highlighting approach where we repeatedly read/ listen to the text and examine the meaning of statements which are particularly revealing and c) Detailed or line-by-line approach where we study every sentence or sentence cluster to determine what it says about the experience.(Noronha & DeCruz 2009)

The researcher has applied the first of the approach whereby the texts were read and re-read holistically along with the memos and notes, to make sense of the experience of the respondents at the discursive sites. The aesthetic memos were sought as a means of uncovering and accessing the sublime and deep yearning to transform the meanings imposed on the workers. Discerning metaphors that would describe the moment or the experience was also another method applied to uncover the meanings. Metaphors opened up understanding about those feelings and experiences which we cannot 'comprehend fully' thus attempt to 'comprehend partially' (Lakoff and Johnson 2008). Subsequently once the broad themes were understood, significant parts of the texts which supplied the theme were re-read and captured. These texts are reflected in Chapter 5 to detail the core theme/s and the experiences of the respondents.

In conclusion, the analysis through the post-structuralist lens was concerned with the detailed examination of the texts while concentrating on articulations of the participants experiences and recurring themes and patterns. The readings and re-readings of the data along with reading

of theoretical frameworks led to emergence of thoughts which were reflected across the data. Finally, these broad themes were then explored with in the follow up interviews as well in the observation memos.

4.7 Trustworthiness

With methods, as with people, if you focus only on their limitations you will always be disappointed. —Ian Shapiro (2002)

Criteria for qualitative research quality has been varied based on the variety of qualitative methodologies (Cresswell 2007; Lincoln and Guba 1985) This can also be 'bewildering' for a novice researcher (Tracy 2010) and thus a universal standard of quality can be attractive. The methods are intrinsically linked to epistemology and ethical responsibilities of research and the thus adopting one universal standard may run the risk of privileging 'new regimes of truth' ((Foucault 1980). The 'subjugated knowledge, located low down in the hierarchy' language that this thesis aims to bring to fore, the struggles and the hostilities which have been driven to the margins that it give centre stage would require which are 'open ended and context specific'(Lather 1993) . 'Trustworthiness' reflects the researchers desire to produce research for a wider social purpose emphasising the humanist aspect inherent in the interpretivist research. Thus, a universal criteria allows dialogue with others who may not be immersed in qualitative research(Gordon and Patterson 2013). Tracy (2010) has presented the eight criteria of quality in qualitative research which emerges from her predisposition towards critical and interpretive research and influenced by other post-structuralist and performative studies such as Lather 1993. She outlines the eight criteria as (a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity,

(d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence.

This study privileges the mobile workers struggles to transform meanings and it emerges from my deep personal engagement and experience in the mobile workplace. I have worked and lived in the space for two decades and continue to do so though associations and friendships. My experiences as a mobile worker, a wife of a mobile worker and the union representative of mobile workers accords me the privilege of a view both inside and outside. The study shakes off the veil of the glamorous world of aviation and uncovers the agony of the suppressed experience. It is an unexplored context which thrusts itself towards the reader as it unfurls. To put it mildly, it a worthy topic.

As the study began, the researchers own experience was at times supplemented or contradicted as the narratives of mobile workers were collected. The unstructured interviews of the fifty eight mobile workers which were eventually analysed, were collected over long conversations in an unhurried pace. The participants spoke at length as if a dam was broken and half an hour scheduled interviews stretched on for the whole afternoons sometimes till late evening. The researcher had social relations with several and more routine conversations supplemented the understanding of the scenario as it unfolded. These engagements generated voluminous thick descriptions which made their lived experiences come alive. Though prior studies with mobile workers have been conducted with rigor with less than 20 participants (Hislop and Axtel 2007; Perry et al.2001) due to the researchers being an insider, more than 60 participants with a varied profile were interviewed and 57 of them find space in the final analysis, three of them recusing themselves due to increased insecurity at the workplace and the fear of reprisal from the

employer. The auto-ethnographical account of the researcher, an ex-mobile worker, not only supplements the narratives, it also brings contextual understanding to the narratives. The interviews were, with a few exceptions, transcribed by the researcher herself. Care was taken to bring the terminologies and the utterances of the participants into the text as it was spoken. Aviation terms are familiar to the researcher and thus the flow of conversation was uninterrupted. The researcher sought clarity if unfamiliar terms were used and additional secondary data in form of documents to substantiate these. The researcher read and reread the narratives reflecting at her own understandings at the same time. This constant engagement with the narratives ensured that as the collection of narratives progressed, sampling strategy moved from purposive, snowball to theoretical thus reaching out to participants who would add to the current narratives with new insights. '*A head full of theories and a case full of data'(* emphasis by researcher) alone may not add rigor but the careful consideration along with detailing of the research process has added to it.

At the outset the thesis clarifies the researchers position, her background as a Union representative of an aviation mobile works union, which influences not only the site of the study but the scope of it as well. The researcher is transparent about the missteps in the processes such as the interview guide with which she began the narrative collection process. As it hindered the conversations, it was abandoned in favour of unstructured interactions guided by the research questions of the study. Reflexivity is a deconstructive exercise for locating the intersections of author, other, text, and world, and for penetrating the representational exercise itself and is one such tool for evaluation. As social constructivism focuses the gaze of the researcher to the forms of interaction, discourse and shared meanings

and emphasize that qualitative research is a co- constituted account, thus reflexive analysis is necessary to examine the impact of the researcher and participants on each other and on research. (Finlay, 2002). Reflexivity means working with multiple interpretations in order to steer clear of traps and/or to produce rich and varied results. Reflexivity may be something that the researcher is engaged in solely or mainly during analysis (before "writing it up"), but it may more or less strongly affect text work and be explicit in the completed text . The auto-ethnographic account of the researcher as a participant has emphasised her own vulnerabilities as a woman mobile worker and her awareness of the effect her presence has on the narratives as well. The researcher tried to grapple with inconsistent findings and sought to reflect on them and her reflective commentary (Miles and Huberman 1994) uncovers her beliefs and predispositions behind the choices made in methods. Reflexivity for me stands for conscious and consistent efforts to view the subject matter from different angles and avoid or strongly a priori privilege a single, favoured angle and vocabulary. One approach is to move between different lines of interpretation, varying and confronting an earlier used vocabulary with a line of interpretation that offers a different angle and with a different vocabulary (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). This means challenging the initial interpretation and the researcher confronting himself or herself and possibly the reader with alternative views; these views may facilitate arriving at the "strongest" or most interesting interpretation and/or producing alternative ones, in which the study may offer more than one type of result.

Credibility is a part of trustworthiness and to increase the integrity and trustworthiness of qualitative research, the intersubjective element which influence data collection and analysis needs to be evaluated. Though it was primarily the researcher who studied the site, an attempt

was made to gain ‘thick descriptions’(Geertz 1973). The participants were encouraged to give details and elabourate on the incidents uncovering the contextual nature of the narratives. The data was also taken over a period of time and at many sites with multiple methods like face to face interview, documents, observations and unstructured conversations, thus ensuring a holistic approach. Triangulation was achieved by within-method and between methods (Jick 1979) multiple indicators (Neuman 1997) with multiple data sources including interview narratives, participant observations, court documents, organizational documents, press releases from Unions and Government departments, Regulatory Handbooks and Policies, National Statistical Data . Interview narratives were taken from a wide range of participants, pilots and cabin crew, private and public airlines, male and female, unionised and executives and thus the experiences developed a rich abet complex picture of the discourses could be constructed(Shenton 2004) and crystallization could occur. *Verstehan* , gaining understanding from participants view was not a hurdle as the researcher herself was a mobile worker and the narratives of the participants include incidents and scenarios mutually experienced with the researcher. Including her in their cry to be heard, they invoke the close friendships they had as they share detailed . The multiple methods of access such as substantiating interview data with documents to corroborate the particulars of the events and occurrences across participants (Van Maanen 1998) as well as get a variety of perspectives.

With the lenghty and ongoing engagement with the participants and being in the field, my trust in the knowledge, understanding of the phenomenon, is steadfast. This comes as I not only lived with the ongoing partial analysis, but as I continued to be in the social milieu of mobile

work, it was a ‘daily livable fact’ (Glaser and Straus 1965), I know in my ‘bones’ the worth of my final analysis and its credibility.

The thesis attempt to create an evocative representation of the lived experiences of the aviation mobile workers and through that create stories ‘that move’. The participants have shared personal narratives, weaving their personal lives with the professional as the two are inseparable for the mobile worker. The acknowledgement of the researcher as an ‘insider’ led to intimate accounts and brutally honest expressions shared in narratives. The mobile workers life as she moves from work to aircraft to layover to base station , is bared open to the reader in its anguish, through the elaborate recounting by the participants. Though not directly transferable, readers would find resonance of the struggle of the mobile workers and their broken psyche, in other subjugated experiences which are marginalised.

Mobile worker through the post-structuralist theoretical and methodological lens has not been studied before and thus the study has significant contributions to theory and practice. It extends the understanding of mobile workers lived experiences at the level of subjectivities and possibilities of resistances which can inform others to act similarly.

4.8 Ethical And Political Considerations

The researcher has been sensitive and extremely conscious of the hazards of disclosure of the participants identities. The research study is from the employees perspective and her struggles find centre stage. As she delved into the world of the mobile worker the researchers unique position as an insider translated to being invited into the private world of the participants. The interviews were rarely frigid occurrences, often colliding with coffee and meals. They took place at residences of the researcher or the participants or at another place which the participant

felt comfortable but never at the participants office or with several participants together. This was not unheard of but the air of insecurity and fear of the loss of job was palpable in the interactions. Several of the participants including the trade union activists have been known to the researcher for several years as members of the same trade union organization or members of the same mobile work community. The participants trusted the researcher and were supportive when she informed them of her desire to do work on a thesis. They spoke openly and many times referenced her own experiences in the conversations. Some of them are also part of the social circle of the researcher and thus she meets with them on other occasions as well. As she is studying organizational subjectivities and resistance, she asked for the participants comfort in revealing their real names or having the conversations recorded. Even when the participants agreed to reveal themselves, at a later interaction if hesitation was apprehended, then the identity of the participants was kept confidential. This was done so that no adverse repercussions flow in their workspaces. The data collection has also been done at places where the participant feels secure. The participants were assured that the interview recordings would not be shared with anyone other than the researcher without the permission of the participants. A few of the participants, in the course of the free flowing conversations , shared personal and delicate experiences and mentioned the names of co-workers or others. The same were not included into the transcripts though it did bring the researcher closer to the lived experiences of the participants. These were some measures taken to protect the participant as the researcher promised them utmost confidentiality. Meaningful coherence has been achieved though the interconnectedness of the scope with the theoretical and methodological

which is further reflected in the analysis and the interpretation of the narratives. The aim as described in the research questions has been met with sincerely and diligence.

5 Chapter 5: Analysis and Interpretation

5.1 Overview

In this chapter I present the findings based on the data collected through observations and interviews in two discursive sites of Pilots and Cabin Crew of Indian commercial airlines. As a participant observer for two decades of working as a mobile worker, my observations have served to supplement the respondent narratives. With the iterative process of going back and forth with the data and theory and reflections, five broad themes have emerged. These are Nomadic Solidarity, Subversive Hospitality, Sacrificed Legal Figure, Broken Subjectivity and Insecure Volatility.

The mobile worker has been impacted with the narratives of globalisation which has leveraged connectivity through technology and also propelled mobility. It has seen the human beings as 'factors and agents' whose condition and social practices are governed by global forces (Bonefeld and Psychopedis 2000). The increased velocity of travel and movement through airspace has led to 'space being recast' (Lefebvre 1991) through which an entirely new space has been born. Aviation has opened up new ways of seeing time and space, the economic incentive to reduce turnover time and accumulate capital has been a prominent explanation of the need for modern acceleration (Simonsen 2005). This also has had the effect of triggering capital-labour contradictions in some of the core areas of safety, hospitality and efficiency with

inherent ambiguities in the arena of mobile work which is intrinsic to aviation industrial relations dynamics.

The civil aviation in India and its operations have in recent times been squeezed into this passage with the increased commodification of airspace. The discourse of open sky is variously espoused as a determinant of passenger will, a nations ownership of the airspace which is 'granted' to private capital and progressively withdrawn from public ownership to own and operate airlines to appease the travelling public's thirst for accessible mobility. The government as the guardian feels for the travelling public and its dual role as provider and protector is employed to serve its needs and the needs of the nation republic to promote the ends of what has been termed as the 'decade of development' (Finance Minister's Budget Speech 2000). The public airlines feel the burden of this role more as it is imagined as the same Government's tool, rusted though it is made to appear, and is used to retain the illusion of its 'Past Glory' with grudging infusions of 'public' money. But this infusion is also a burden which it wants to cast away through privatization thus divesting itself of all commercial responsibilities of running the business. But its continued presence in aviation is exercised through its control of the regulator, the Directorate of Civil Aviation(DGCA) which is an administrative arm of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and is headed by a bureaucrat and appointee of the government (DGCA website) a position which does not require any aviation related experience to helm the affairs but only the "ability' to align with the diktats of the Government of the day. The regulator in intervals of time prescribes rules to regulate the operations and operators of civil aviation. It is also meant to be the custodian to safeguard them airline operations from violations, thus ensuring not only 'open' but also 'safe' sky policies and practices.

The old has to give way to the new and the operators then have to create a conducive environment to enable these new realities. Delivered through its frontline and back end employees, these new ways, have introduced wide ranging changes to the structure, systems, policies, procedures and eventually management of these airline organizations. To give effect to the 'discourse of enterprise'(du Gay 1996) the employees consent is to be manufactured (Buroway 1982) This is enacted through 'cost saving', efficiency measures and increased focus on passenger as a customer instead of her as a 'guest', with the employees being evaluated on parameters such as 'on time performance' and 'customer feedback' which support these outcomes. As seen in other sites of transformative changes, it is followed by increased unilateral exercise of managerial prerogative, decreased partnership with workers' representatives and legitimizing of management actions (Thomas & Davis 2005).

The mobile workers experience these changes and even while "performing" their management assigned roles they also simultaneously enact their resistance to these impositions of subject positions by creating, defending and maintaining their 'valued conceptions of self' (Ashforth and Mael 1999) through the 'adaption, subversion and re-inscription' of the pulls and pressures in these discourses (Thomas and Davis 2005).

Paraphrasing Simmel the "*Aircraft is not a spatial entity with techno-social consequences but a techno-sociological entity that is formed spatially* (In Allen 2000). This study is in a sense an exploration of "the techno-sociological entity that is performed spatially" through the post-structural theoretical and methodological lens in order understand the combined effect of the intensification of managerial hegemony, the performance of collectivization and the modalities of the production of resistance at the point of spatial-mobile engagement of the interactive

players. The exploration has thrown up five themes which help in decoding the undercurrents of the techno-sociological mobile workspace dynamics.

5.2 Nomadic Solidarity

"Space can now be recognized as an active constitutive component of hegemonic power . . . It tells you where you are and it puts you there . ."

Michael Keith and Steve Pile 1993

For the mobile worker, movement is the only constant. The lure of foreign lands, the desire for unfettered soaring above the ground realities, an escape sometimes from economic woes and at other time from social pressures, have propelled the flying crew into the jet age. The 'aura 'of distinctiveness of destinations had reduced with the speed of travel along with the increased commodification of space of the aircraft (Gregory 1993). Rapid globalisation has resulted in economies that rely on constant transportation to fuel business and personal needs. But these also have to be effected with precision and efficiency to make it commercially viable enterprise and thus the 'identity project'(du Gay 1996) is initiated with the objective of have a tight control on the movement resulting in financial efficiency and the assurance of safety.

Mobile workers have entered the flying job with the attraction of travelling thus operating to diverse cities is in itself a reward that continues to pull them towards aviation. As articulated by a male cabin crew (P56) ' I was born to fly'…

> You know it was a deep dream come true - I wanted to be here …And the highlight of this job is not the money, it's also the recognition and the status in society and doing something (exciting)

> .It took my whole family a notch up in society, my child could get better opportunities. (I am) very grateful. (P56)

After several years the nomadic life offers an escape from the mundane,

> "flying does give us freedom which as a youngster you don't realize and later you realize. Like you are out of the house and just forget what is happening in the house and you are out, it gives you a sense of freedom which is very important." (P 6)

But it can also bring in isolation and rootlessness,

> "Now you are in layover, if you are friends with somebody, then good, else its lonely. It's about mental health also, you are on your own." P 41

The high velocity in which the travel for these workers occurs makes seasons change within a span of a flight, the morning extends for an entire day and many times so does the dark night. This relentless movement of people and cargo ignores the limits of human capability, interferes with the natural rhythm of the body leading to physical and mental fatigue and exposing them to global diseases (Lee and Kim 2018, Budd et al 2010). This linkage exacerbated with 'the technologies of movement' enabled variations in speed, capacity, schedules and travel times play with the bodily rhythm and the rhythm of the families and the communities (Vannini 2010) . The crew take on themselves to highlight their experience of the nature of their job, recognising that others may not see the peculiarity of their work and expectations have to be context driven. Pilot (P57) active union member and self-proclaimed 'troublemaker' has written to stakeholders about it. The difficulty of his circumstances is elabourated by him by evoking science and human endeavour in the same breath.

> "The work in aviation, its nature of work defies the laws of evolution itself. Man is a land-based mammal. Okay. We are hard wired only to work in 2 dimensions - length and breadth - on the

> surface of the earth. We have a third and fourth dimension maybe expected to work in a 3-dimensional environment against nature and against gravity and yet expected to perform a task which requires minimum error …Contrast this with the astronaut who goes to a space station… The space platform is a stable platform from which he works… Take also, for example, the submariner also has a similar 3 dimensional environment and so does the deep sea diver, however in the case of all three professions, the platform that they work in that is the submarine or the deep sea divers and their area of work as well as the space station can all be made stationary… if required, in the event of an emergency ..but the aircraft is a dynamic platform moving in the 3D environment, take off cannot stop in the middle of its flight and therefore not only are we defying the principles of physics , we are defying the very luxury enjoyed by other professions wherein they can stop and seek help. We cannot."

This constant movement deprives any stability to the crew. Even the Bedouin work on the rhythms of the seasons, working with their animals as they trod on routes with water and trade, creating rituals to habituate themselves to a familiar cycle. This brings stability to their movement. The crew are rootless. The aircraft routes are a factor of several dimensions and do not remain the same; the patterns of operations are erratic with constant changes brought about by commercial, and in the case of aviation, even political considerations. The rituals, family occasions, birthdays, festivals are all sacrificed at the altar of the Nomad. This nomadic life is dampened by the realities of the ground, a woman cabin crew (P8) recounts the emotional burden as the volatility of airline operations increases.

> "Today I am very guilty about flying. I feel 'Oh my god, because I am flying I am not able to give time to my in-laws, they are old as well. They are in their 80s and I feel guilty about not

> being there for important family occasions, I feel guilty about not looking after my father so I am always on a guilt trip."

A woman cabin crew (P1) speaks of the breakdown of communication with her husband due to her constantly staying away. According to her, this is due to agreements with union not being adhered to and instead arbitrary CAR is being implemented, reducing time at home drastically.

> "We were taking our bilateral time off and suddenly they stopped giving us the bilateral time off. They stopped logging in, and it became very difficult and they had terminated 13 people in Delhi ….so they tried this on us in Bombay and that's when I said you know like… bilateral time will go I won't have any family time. As it is my husband gets angry saying that half the time, I'm at my mom's house. I go and meet my mom because they are old you know. He also doesn't have time, I also don't have time, so we hardly meet. What is life then? Its better I leave him, or he leaves me"

In the guise of "efficient" operations with optimal use of 'resources' including human, the "wasteful" time at home was being curtailed. The trade union office had been locked up after tension between two rival groups flared up. The result was that there was no union which can take up matters with management. A veteran employee (P21), an HR professional moved over to Cabin Crew with its lure of more allowances and travel. He is also a trade union official with more than a decade of being in the committee of the cabin crew union and leading it for two years.

> "I have enjoyed (My time with Air India) until four years or three years ago when the management started implementing decisions unilaterally without even having any concern about the problems of employees. There should always be a dialogue between an employer and employee, so that you can understand the difficulties of each other and try to find a middle ground

> even while on a business efficiency path … the management is not giving any right to the employees and ….50% to 60% percent of the work force have succumbed to the pressure from the management. …there was conflict between two groups of unions and there were two political parties involved – result is there has been no representative body for the Crew that is why the rest 40% have also followed the safest path of agreeing to whatever the management says."

The unilateral dictatorial tendencies are aided and abetted by the regulator DGCA which due to the structure of civil aviation in India does not have true independence, as it reports to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, which also appoints the CMD of the national airline.

"Whether it is secretary of civil aviation or whether it is Prime Minister's office or whether it is Minister (Civil Aviation) or whether it is a regulator, because all of these come through the Ministry of Civil Aviation and remains there, so independence is compromised to a certain extent. We have almost around one lakh ten thousand violations documented, but nobody wants to pay attention to it." (P18, Cabin Crew Union Official, Delhi)

This closing of the union office due to inter-union and political rivalry has shaken the crew, especially women who are under pressure at work and on the home front too. With the bilateral and resultant bidding for flights and rest periods at base erased, their world has crumbled and they are forced to adopt a militant stance to protect their interests.

> Do we say NO, we don't …we will report sick also, we will try to change… today people just don't land up for a flight.. Transport has reached to your house and transport has been sent back stating that it is my bilateral or whatever, it is my time off or any reasons they wish to give for that, they don't come on the flight. You have applied for CL and they have not granted so next

> option is they are not coming on the flight. Every time you cannot say report sick giving various reasons. Most people on this job were not militant. Today very quiet people if I quote someone (P1, P20)… such quiet girls… are. today so militant. Why? they were the quietest girls…. because they have been harassed. They are unable to manage…. Now you report sick, last week they sent a Doctor to some crew members' houses (P6)

The women crews' frustration of not getting any relief has made them adopt an alternate aggressive posture, given them the gumption to come together in a group. The crew have appropriated the discourse of safety and linked it to fatigue due to inadequate rest and use that to report sick. The action is within the rules and yet it is done because of genuine reasons like real fatigue but it is also done to protest against an insensitive management which is not only violating bilateral agreements but also ultimately compromising safety standards laid down by Regulators. In the absence of Union protection and fear of retaliation by management, they have found solidarity in the informal collective resistance. Using informal means of communication (WhatsApp) of 'The dash-400 girls', an informal cohort group consequent to the women-only recruitment drive which happened in 1992 and due to an ongoing strike action, this group of women cabin crew flew exclusively with each other for over 12 months, living, eating, learning and supporting and exploring their nomadic lives in solidarity. They have maintained the cohort closeness and cohesiveness and in spite of dwindling numbers (less than 50 now) have grown into a collective, energised by the threats inherent in the nomadic nature of their work-family lives, which was not only a form of non-formal collective protest but also a means to ensure family time as well as self-care time, a sense of belongingness in a

progressively alienating organizational environment with a depleting union voice. Nomadic identities find their own nomadic solidarities to bring some meaning in the midst of managerial hegemony, union disarray and fractured work-family lives(Johnston et al 2019).

The narrative of three active members of this group P 1, P 2 and P 20 speak of the helplessness they faced with no one to go to and then the strength they gave each other as they refused to allow the management to alter their right of choice using mostly covert means to slip through the language of rules and find new ally's using regionalism as a initiator, fending off doubters and keeping the faith. It started when the time off as per bilateral agreements was ignored with a new DGCA minimum requirement of rest of only 22hours after a long flight replacing it. This made flying duties untenable for many women with family responsibilities, but other single women with no support also resented it as it gave them no time to do their essential tasks at base and affected their health and social life. But the fear psychosis that was built with the narrative of terminations of some for following the union agreed bilateral made it fearsome for many to oppose it.

> "It started when they stopped giving bilaterals and terminated people - if there is no time off then my life is finished, I will have to give up flying. I missed checking on the flight and the transport came home, the Commander (of this flight) was the department head. I logged saying it's in my bilateral time-off; called the office and informed that due to FDTL would not operate the flight, so I am not accepting the flight…I told myself…. now you are finished... So, my attitude was - whatever happens, happens, my heart was trembling, I was scared within… because they create this fear in you by sending transport home... they think since I have worn the uniform now, I will go……. The name is actually removed in GD., but they don't tell you since it is bilateral based, but still transport is sent to instill fear. I still went down to the transport and then saw (P20)

> -.she offered to check and cover for me… I said - please give me your number, we have to form a group, collect money ... what if tomorrow anybody gets grounded …. 20-25000 due to that person will go. So, one person is grounded some amount will go to her home…. we didn't want anyone to go and give an apology… what's the use. One day you are grounded and next day you go and apologize…why don't we take a stand… You must take a stand, what's the use of cribbing on flights…. How many times will we make reports about fatigue, or less time off… I met a few girls on flight.. I started taking their numbers ..I met them on Facebook also but not so much because I didn't want anybody to know I am doing something because there are stooges, even in the office… So I was doing it slowly, slowly…

Once the initial communication within the small group started, the women used the resources of the organization to disrupt its control over the crew.

> "We send email to management; we do not get a reply; this we do both collectively and individually. First, we used to send emails with all our names in the end, but it was not working... so then we've decided to send individually... bloody flood their mailbox... every day I send emails…they don't do anything to us… But nothing happens to them…. We've filed an RTI and got a reply that the MOU (Bilateral) are to be honored till fresh bilateral is signed… I've also filed an RTI for the Australia Long Range flight…We have to fight for survival now. Those who do not take initiative to adhere to the bilateral people must stop talking to them, there is so much anger... 'you're not taking 22 hours what a bitch you are' ..won't it make us achieve our goal faster if all take initiative... they cannot sack more than 100 people, they can sack 20, not 200.. earlier, they broke the pilot union… so let us learn from them, let 300 get sacked, let the airline come to a grinding halt…do it now. we have an upper hand, if it goes to court we can say they are openly violating DGCA norms, now is the time or die for the rest of the time. it is frightening

> for many people - EMI, kids school fees, if we don't do it then they will play 'tandav' on our heads. do or die."

The collective did not include the male crew since they tend to either trivialize women's efforts or they transpose the misogynistic union environment into this group. Identifying themselves as Mothers symbolising mature individuals who are taking precious time away from family as the organizing principle to put up informal-collective resistance, the solidarity comes from the shared need to maintain work-family balance and also to protect themselves from the very threat to the life of financial independence they have created for themselves to protect self and family.

> "I said I don't want boys because they send jokes and then some other useless stuff. We are all mothers we do not like or comment or joke or put anything of that kind. If one of us has a problem .. anything .. for this group. I assure you , I will remove money from my house and give it to hers. This is my assurance. It does not matter who it is… I told a friend, if the matter becomes serious, then we will fight it out, it may take time but that is fine."

Early in the year 2000, the Boeing Company, one of the main civil aircraft manufacturers, the other being Airbus Industries, rolled out the long range (LR)777 aircraft which could fly non-stop for 20 hours or more. The earlier non-stop flights were at most 9 hours with the damaging consequences of lengthy Flight Duty hours and the consequent need to stay awake along with the rapid time zone transitions which became an issue from Lindberg's path breaking transatlantic flight.(Lee & Kim 2018). The Flight Risk Management Systems (FRMS) have been regulated through the ICAO bringing in FDTLs to recognize the mental and physical limits of human performance of aviation mobile workers. The researcher was herself involved in the regulatory framework creation through the CAR for Boeing 777 as a Trade Union official

for Cabin Crew (AICCA 2008) at a time when Air India was only the third airline after El Al and Delta to have started Long Haul operations in the global civil aviation sector. The regulator and the airline both acted opportunistically to exploit the vacuum of no prior regulations and agreements (Bilaterals with Unions) with a move to thrust FDTL rules which used human beings as 'resources' to balance operational safety and passenger comfort, both high cost factors, with profitability as a priority for its survival. (Battaeu 2001)

> "I remember in early 2006 we came to know that Boeing 777 Long Range was being inducted and it would operate non-stop from India to US. The existing FDTL was 10 hours extendable to 12 and this flight would be 14-16 hours with additional 4 hours for reporting at airport and deplaning, immigration and so on. Additionally, 2 hours of commute to airport and another 2 to the hotel at New York. We were looking at a beyond 24 hours being in uniform! How could we stay alert and function without sleep when the flight departure was 2 am IST? The management at this time was always talking about cost-cutting and its lack of profitability and we had signed a long protracted agreement with them in 2003. The AI-IA merger was a disaster and the airline was deep in the red. With no clarity from them, we began visiting the DGCA office in Delhi. . In conversations with them, we spoke of flight safety hazard and how as pioneers of advanced flight operations (non-stop to US!) we had to showcase this fleet as the best in safety. I had worked closely with ITF and through their office in London contacted many airlines including Delta Airlines (AFL-CIO) who sent their FDTL, the ITF also sent studies on Fatigue, Circadian Rhythms. After many months of work, the draft CAR was created by few of us at AICCA and sent to DGCA in April 2008. They accepted it as it was. Complete" (P58 Union Official and Ex Cabin Crew)

The narrative of endurance defying duration of flight demanded the need to create a mini-world up in the aircraft considering the crew spent a whole day and a whole night in the time capsule, where you slept as you took off and landed as you woke up at 7 am in NYC, in a sense mimicking a night spent at home after a tiring day's work. The unresponsive management pushed the crew to directly engage with the regulator and push for relief, interpreting their role not as consumers of the rules but as the creators of the very rules which would govern their work life – thus creating the conditions for their own exploitation and simultaneously dis-identifying the airlines sole right to define their time in the absence of trade unions and or any striking action.

The crew are learning to accommodate to the issues of jetlag The effect on the body of long exposure to oxygen deprived air, undissolved nitrogen in their veins, mild hypoxia affects not only the crew but also families of crew members. This discomfort is translated to into cold and impersonal FDTL terms with local time being moved to Universal Time (UTC) which sees the hours as mere numbers with no human or social element to it. Aviation is physical work performed by pilots and cabin crew inflight, whose 'aeromobile' bodies are living, breathing and experiencing flights in differing ways (Budd 2011). The Jain (2010) study of UK bus travel highlighted the timetables role in structuring 'rhythms of movements' between spaces sustaining relationships between the people who occupy the bus, the vehicle itself and the inanimate things that inhabit the space of travel.

> "It takes an effort to stay alert. All flights are departing at 2-3 am. Sometimes you get sleep sometimes you don't… we are subjected to Circadian rhythms. You are only working at 50% brain power. And you have to sit for another 8 -9 hours and then land. Any emergency will not

> recognize whether you have rested. Cabin pressurization has bad effects. Think of yourself being transported from Shimla to Mumbai in Elevation mode in 30 minutes. Your body will take a hit. This takes a toll on the body, pilots age fast. We work on our diets and we have medicals every year. We watch ourselves. The mental health issue has to be talked about, as we are away from home, spend a lot of time alone. I pray and I have good friends…my family, religion keeps me sane." P 41

The Crew appropriate spaces within the aircraft to insulate themselves from the demands of work and family while on flights. This appropriation does not escape the notice of the management who try to discipline them by assigning usage norms for the areas within the aircraft.

The senior cabin crew members have been designated as Cabin In Charge (CIC), replacing the contested IFS position which has been disbanded. A female CIC (P6) finds that the task of keeping the crew awake is difficult and she empathizes with the young crew with childcare responsibilities and just lets them be.

> Now we have five hours of rest on LR (after that)...for example, one junior boy was sleeping at the back (Crew Rest) …. I asked him why he was sleeping, he said the baby was crying… I couldn't get sleep so I am sleeping again. .. that's the reality… if company has not given proper rest or the company has not given proper leave and he is coming on board what can I do about that?

Like a rolling stone that gathers no moss, the freedom to choose flights, sectors and even co-workers and create a schedule, and managed by unions, were practices which put the mobile worker, the pilot and the cabin crews, in charge of their lives. This way of life, a melange of

time and space, created a cocoon which insulated the crew from the turbulence of flying careers for years.

There was this bidding thing which was there but then it gave me enough time at home... I could do my hours so the pre-assignment system was a brilliant system. I was getting my cake and eating it too. I was out for about 15-18 days and out of those, would balance those 10 days .I was very happy doing my flying. I have always pre-assigned myself so that was a brilliant system that worked for me. Anybody whom I met was good enough for me. (P 14)

These practices came to be seen by management as unacceptable privileges which had become "hindrances" to smooth operations of the airline, and thus were abruptly withdrawn in the name of efficiency, leaving the crew to scramble to salvage their lives. Added to this was the increasingly erratic and unaccountable managerial behaviour.

> "Nowadays it is becoming more crazy, longer flights, less time off, harassment in the office; for every small thing they harass you; no leave for the past two years; they cancelled leave, during Diwali after they had assigned leave - they said Madam (the ED) will sanction leave. A week after they sanctioned leave, after I had done all my holiday bookings, an SMS comes. All Diwali leave cancelled. So I had put in - what 40, 50 thousand rupees. All wasted" P29

> "There are threats, they suspend people, they terminate people, they don't give you leave, they have started the sham of request flights, you know you can request, they took away bidding, so our choice of flying went away, (started this) sham in January of request flights, they either don't grant you the request or they grant you a request with a nice little gap ahead of the request so that you know you just end up getting pulled out before the flight you wanted to do. It is not protected, so that way yes they are not treating us well at all it is like as if we have sinned or something and

> we are here being punished for our sins; and that management is going to treat us like absolute scum of the earth or something like that" P 2

The total control over movement of operating crew to serve the wheels of efficiency and mobility was resisted by crew members by destabilising the idea of unfettered flights. Using alternative discourses of cultural roots – of a gendered family identity as a caregiver-mother or the need for a restful body and social relevance, the crew began to re-inscribe the meanings to their work-life subjectivities.

The sensitizing concept of "Nomadic Solidarity' which emerges from the narratives of the lived experiences of mobile workers is constituted by the dynamic, unnatural aero-mobile spatiality in a physiological world where human beings are physically wired to a more static, natural terra firma-mobile spatiality. Besides this stress of an unnatural life-world, mobile workers confined in aero-mobile "capsules" which is the aircraft in motion also have to face the physical, psychological consequences of aero-mobile temporality on account of movement through various time zones as they transit from the point of departure to the point of destination especially after the advent of long haul flights.

The concept of Nomadic Solidarity which characterizes aero-mobile working is not only subject to the vagaries of spatiality and temporality but also by the impact of managerial hegemony, collective voice as well as embedded resistance to the changing contours of mobile working regimes. Earlier as the subjective memories as depicted in the narratives of lived experiences of aero-mobile workers, the negative consequences of air borne spatiality and temporality were mitigated through the involvement of mobile worker collective organizations and collective voice in managing work allocative structures and processes which led to better

management of crew scheduling keeping work-life imbalance concerns in view. But with the de-recognition of unions and closure of union offices, the techno-social practices and norms were dramatically replaced by software driven techno-managerial resource allocative methods which not only disrupted the social compact between management and employees but also led to traumatizing not only aero-mobile working but also led to enhanced work-family fissures and ruptures. The Nomadic Solidarity which was a source of pride and professionalism as long as the normative culture was founded on the world view revolving around a techno-social compact has undergone a metamorphosis with the takeover by the techno-managerial regimes of dominance. While the vestiges of trade unions still remain as a shadow of its former self, resistance has passed over to more non-formal and localized modes to counter the negative consequences of spatiality, temporality as well as erosion of voice. In the new world of unrelenting insensitivities and uncertainties, nomadic identities find innovative ways through localized rediscovery of nomadic solidarities as they seek to reimagine the spatiality and temporality which is intrinsic to their lives in the air and on the ground.

5.3 Broken Subjectivity

When Flyer flew, with its cambered wing and controllable elevator, its rudder and the first rudimentary ailerons, the Wright Brothers knew exactly what they were doing. The achievement at Kill Devil Hills was not the fact that the place sustained itself at about 7 miles per hour over 120 feet, or the addition of motor and props to a glider, but the Oliver controlled it. He flew the plane. (Barry Lopez, Flight)

Airline crew do not operate in a vacuum, they have formal rules and work within a technologically complex and micro-regulated aviation system thus making it a perfection demanding and risk laden profession. The challenge comes from the competing pressures of regulatory, commercial, technical and environmental factors on the one hand (Bennet 2006) and the pressures associated with working in a confined, controlled and enclosed space where not unlike Foucault's Madman, they are transported rather than just travelling (1988). Professionalism creates an elite brand status for its members, gives them a position of elite leadership and authority but at the same time their legitimacy hinges on their 'learning to play the part' as well as gaining and maintaining norms about technical knowledge and professional behaviour (Hodgson 2005). An established profession that aviation has become, it accords a position of high regard for roles such as that of the Pilot and an envious status as in the case of aviation cabin crew.

Flying an aircraft symbolises an aspiration, a way of life, a childhood dream. It is larger than the organization job role.

> I joined NCC and came to Safdarjung (aerodrome) to do parasailing, saw a small plane, I thought it was a glider … came to know it was a plane.. I just had to fly it…my father was a school teacher, he thought I was doing awaragardi (a wastrel), parents wanted a doctor-engineer..and I wanted to be a Pilot.. Till I got my PPL (Private Pilots License) he did not believe me..it was destined.. it was a push from above. God has played a big role. (P40 – Female Senior Pilot - Commander)
>
> I was raised on a farm, and I saw the aircraft when I was little, 8 or 9, my uncle was in the police service and he took me to meet KPS Gill, Chief who came in an aircraft.. I told my parents, Mujhe Yeh Karna Hai.(I have to do this). I went to flying school in Hyderabad, there was no flying so

> then went on to Canada, did my flying there. Joined JL (Low Cost Carrier) at 18 or 18 half years of age. but wanted to join AI (National Carrier). I cleared the exam, started by flying Boeing 777 that was in 2008, now doing my command conversion. (P 41, Male Co Pilot)

The pilots profession is a licensed career category and the aviation regulatory bodies worldwide have standards which govern the bestowing and maintenance of the status (DGCA CAR). The increased complexities of the aircraft systems with the glass cockpit have reduced the dependency on the human expertise of the Navigator and later the flight engineer. Alluding to it as a profession which is based on science and technology and as highly complex, a Pilot (P57) puts it on a higher pedestal than others. The skills required from the pilot to do this job are honed over time with many levels to be cleared before the first officer can become a commander. The fact that it is monitored adds specificity to the tasks and requires a "soldier" to perform it.

> "Aviation (Pilots) as you know, is a highly evolved profession. The systems and the practices and processes have evolved over decades of research and study and evaluation and therefore these processes are also exposed to international environment and has to be performed to the highest standards. There is absolutely no scope for any deficiency, no matter what the risks of the work environment may be, the end result has to be always the same - which is to land the aircraft safely, no matter what. In case he doesn't do that, I would say that the systems in place and the fact that the industry is a highly technology advanced and evolved industry, it is subject to high scrutiny - both regulatory as well as legal scrutiny. It is a very, very stringent and extremely professional perfection seeking work environment. I would say that its almost a regimented process where we like soldiers have been drilled into being disciplined, to follow the processes and checklists and procedures. And the very fact that we are monitored by the system

> - the voice recorders and DFDR and the black boxes, you know there is constant scrutiny, constant accountability and the cheques and balances ensure that there is actually no scope for complacency." (P17)

The onus of the operations has gradually shifted completely on to the pilot with demands of keeping abreast with constant updating of procedures, circulars and directives from multiple agencies including the aircraft manufacturer, the country specific regulators and the airline. A senior Pilot and Instructor/Examiner on Boeing 777 (P55) elaborates on the preparedness required even before the flight has commenced and the mental frame of being in the aircraft.

> "Before going on the flight the airline sends the flight papers with flight plan, weather, NOTAMs, Aircraft MEL on email to all the operating crew of that flight. I am to read all these and if there are any deviations that I want, to call the flight dispatcher before reaching the dispatch (the flight dispatch is the office of the airline responsible for flight operations). Many don't do it and wait to be briefed at the dispatch, this may be okay with a Bombay-Delhi flight as the weather is only for a few stations en route and an alternate but for the long-haul flights every en route station's weather, airfield NOTAMs, some have dropped their firefighting category so we can't go there, in winters most are ice-bound and not available especially in Russia Siberia. If the flight plan is through weather conditions, clear air turbulence then we have to change it for passenger comfort, so all this means I have to be prepared for all this. In about 20 minutes of reaching dispatch, we have to discuss the routing, printout of the flight papers, finalise the fuel, inform engineering to begin refuelling and calculate speeds. The mandatory meeting with cabin crew mostly doesn't happen as they have reported earlier and left for the aircraft. Every minute at the airport is crucial and any deviations can result in a delayed flight. And with all this now we have the mandatory pre and post flight breath analyser test (commonly known as the alcohol test) which has to be cleared before proceeding to the aircraft." (P55)

The fuel efficiency and design elements of new aircrafts have ensured that long range flights without a refuelling stopover are the norm, thus increasing the time spent inside the aircraft without a break. Traversing longer distances is made possible by air routes at higher troposphere and closer to the poles thus increasing the risk of UV radiation. But the stringent medical standards require a near perfect human body with no aberrations related to the physical health and weight parameters. Mental alertness is required to wrestle the plane from the elements but mental fatigue and stress are ignored when creating the SOPs. Even when the standards are there, they are violated with impunity.

> "FDTL- is a joke as for rest, they are compromising on rest. We would after long haul get 6 days, not any more.We are not any use to society jetlagged and with fatigue, mental health suffers. They should not compromise on safety. Unfortunately they are not doing it. The solution is simple. The watchdog is DGCA. We need someone who understands business, sitting as DG, who should not let these companies get away with it. They are bullying their way, diluting FDTL, there is a lot of scientific research which goes behind these regulations. You need Rest , it is the main thing.. If you give that the operating crew is less productive, but safer.. See the example of 3 Spice jet aircrafts which went off the runway, this is a prime example of collusion, of neglect." (P41, Male Co Pilot)

The mobile nature of the job keeps this professional group separated. An ex-union official of the pilots union (P12) said that the usual congregation into a pack is rarely possible, even in the yearly General Body Meetings of the Union.

Knowing that pilots are not there in their bases most of time, we used to have about 60 out of 400 odd people coming in and that is the maximum you can find in numbers at any given point

in time in Bombay, so 100 members were in Delhi, so out of 300 about 60 to 70 people used to show up. The maximum we have had is 110 while we were not on strike.

But using the 'anytime anywhere' network the performance of solidarity occurs uninterrupted. With the 'sense of security' and the avenue of voice that the union provides, the young pilot-union member finds alternate ways to connect (P41).

"When we join the company, we join the Union. All do it. *Gives you sense of security.* Alone the management would not listen so when union takes up issues, then they will listen. We engage with the Union on Whatsapp. When we have a discussions, the union managing committee is also reading it. They take action then. Sometimes in whatsapp it gets lost but on email it doesn't, so we email the committee."

The airline owns every breath of the pilot with no room to take a breather. Passenger bodies like CAPA routinely share the on-time performance records of the airlines which is a parameter of its standing. Time is bound tightly with the procedures and any break in their rhythm results in delays which then has a cascading effect with passenger complaints, missing slots for take-off and connections… The commander of the flight has to proceed in a pre-ordered fashion to do his duty (P55)

> "We have been given specific time -like 10 mins or so for immigration, similarly for security and we have to board the aircraft 45 minutes before departure, the entry time is recorded".
>
> But within it the inherent ambiguities of the role step in, opening up spaces of passenger safety and comfort, where he asserts his control on the delivery of his role.
>
> "The presence of cockpit crew is required if passengers have to board while refuelling is on, just in case of fire in order to give a command for evacuation of passengers. If any delay has happened in the reporting to the aircraft then crew has to send an explanation preferably before departure

> or on landing since a message seeking explanation will be waiting at the station. Sometimes we have a sick passenger or if meals are not loaded, special meals especially; or not enough water, or aircraft is not clean and so many other things. Engineering may be okay with some things but I may not accept it, then I have to take a call to delay, it is on me as the Captain of the flight." (P55)

The Pilot resumes his position as the captain of the flight by taking decisions using the professional narrative to include all matters that would concern the flight, including the comfort of the passengers. He stretches time if needed to accommodate a sick passenger, at the cost of 'on time' command from the airline.

"Being 'on time' is being on fire", tells a seasoned pilot to Barry Lopez as they gaze at the outside of the aircraft. Time as they say has dimensions, agitation and transparency specific to the place and here as she sits in the cockpit, the pilot slows the time down to create space. Though aware that they will be questioned on it, professional knowledge is brought to the fore to put up a defence when any dispute arises on the decision of the pilot.

> "You have situations when you have MEL and you are not comfortable taking the aircraft. It is up to the Captain to accept it or not. Everything is based on the safety factor. There are other things like the lumber factor (a feature on the pilot seat) which is a comfort issue, if it is not working, then I may not write it". (P39) Senior Female Pilot of Private Airline.

The airlines promote themselves as an egalitarian space and each year on women's day, celebrate it with an All Woman Flight, with the Pilot, Co-Pilot and all the cabin crew being female. With wide coverage in media, and increasing number of women pilots in the airline, the claim of equality is made. The profession is traditionally masculine with the captain being

the alpha male of the pack of the Flight crew both cockpit and cabin. To be an accepted member of the profession, 'learning to play the part' was difficult for the pioneer women in Indian Aviation. "We don't treat them differently" is the refrain from most men pilots especially seniors who represent the management.

> "Gender does not change anything. We might have to be watchful about the language. Most of the time women also use it in the Aircraft. In the past as women were not common, it was different. They had to struggle to prove themselves, not anymore" (P41 Young Male Co-Pilot)

The experience of the Pilot profession for women is however not the same. The struggles to join aviation were narrated by several participants with most attributing it to divine intervention. The task seemed so uphill that only God could come to the rescue of women was the refrain.

> "I would have equal number of women as men.. I would be curious about how this factor would evolve. I have a gut feeling it will be a better world..If every environment had equal women and men then society would be better.. Particularly in aviation we have been so male dominated for decades.. it would be very interesting to see how things evolve. A species called women are NOT welcome in aviation" (P 40, emphasis her own)

A young Female captain experiences the pressure of conforming to norms of the profession which look beyond her capabilities to her appearance. A second generation pilot and now married to another pilot, (P38) she is not insulated from the scrutiny she undergoes. The female anatomy is the first space of differentiation and the women often hide it.

> "There is a lot of focus on what we wear - lot of discussion on what you wear. She wore heels? It gets hotly debated. You take off your nail paint before going on a check flight or training flight or route check. Suddenly the instructor will call out asking are you wearing nail paint. I remember

> we had an 'AI Layover wardrobe' a bit loose, covered up, not so nice-looking clothes. If you wear nice clothes, you are trying to impress the Captain; if you are attractive, they don't know how to behave; they don't know, they haven't cracked it. Now I wear what I want. I think as you get older the situation changes. Then when you were young you feel the whole onus of unwelcome attention, most women were brought up like this. Now it's different - that the onus is on yourself".

Harassment is not spoken of and if it is reported it is often blamed on women implying that that they are covering up the lapses in professional competence. Women too shy away from acknowledging it, they instead persist with the 'work hard' narrative.

> "There was no harassment but you feel that you have to work harder than anyone else" (P37)

> "Initially there were people who thought I was a duffer because I am a woman. Capt. David had said that I would have to work 200% to prove myself. I have heard people have suffered harassment. It does become uncomfortable. Initially people tried making passes at me, you are seen as a commodity, a useable item. I have seen (pilots) talking bad about women, my retort is that not all men are alike, so not all men are A++ and not all women are D -." (P40)

> "You don't get the benefit of doubt. You have to be diligent, hardworking, simple, cannot do anything daring, exceptional. 'she is good for being a girl'. I know that I am better than many others but did not feel the burden of gender. If you do badly, they label you 'these women'. Men do not get labelled." (P 38)

Whereas the pilots lean on the technical knowledge and skill to leverage the professional status, the cabin crew has been denied the 'professional' badge by the regulatory body. The industry

relies on youthful appearance and high quality service to boost this claim. Airlines routinely focus on the 'male gaze' often objectifying the female cabin crew. Vintage Indian Aviation advertisements claim 'Next time you are in New York, Be Unfaithful' with an accompanying picture of an Air Hostess (Cabin Crew) in traditional Indian attire(Air India Archives). Hardly any branding advertisements have any male cabin crew featured, but only women, all young, all attractive and dressed well, inviting the passengers to the flight. In a promotional video shot in the 1970s , for the national carrier, the beauty of the saree on the Air Hostess is displayed as she bends down with food as she serves a passenger. The video further alludes to the east-west coming together with the passenger "having the beauty of the orient at his elbow" and the 'shimmering shepherdess brings her charges from the tarmac to the bus'. "One's professional identity is central to subjectification" (Alvesson and Szkudlarek 2020). The focus on the cabin crew as enticements to the passengers was aided and abetted by the stories of their glamourous, lavish lifestyles (TOI, Verve). The Senior Air Hostess and In-charge of Training at a legacy airline (P9) recounts those days as the 'golden days' of the airline. She further shares the selection processes adopted where the women were selected on their attractiveness while male crew were in the shadow. In the selection process, the qualities of demure behaviour and physical attractiveness were tested.

"The moment a person walked in we just looked at the pleasantness. The way the person is, dress code, we specify the dress code, communication and appearance. They wanted women to look better than men. The girls had to be more beautiful. If a guy had a fault of something, unless it was very visible, jaane do. Pass. But with the girls it was not accepted and pimples were not accepted. Pimples was another thing - they looked for clear skin, pleasantness and

good communication, proportionate height and weight. Pleasantness was about the way they talk - it is very intangible, indefinable but the moment you see a person you just like them."

The luxury of the aviation travel was likened to a Five Star Hotel and the simulation of the ambiance was done by the superlative 'poshness' of the cabin crew. Another senior Air Hostess (P54) recounts her own experience of selection, when she was put on reserve list and had to have the tiny space between her front teeth cosmetically altered to be able to join in.

The airline enforced this narrative.

> "In the organization, (if) there would be a complaints would be either a passenger complaint or there would be a complaint from colleagues or by the in-charge of the flight and we would be asked for an explanation followed by "corrective" training. They grounded you; they sent you back to training again to get refresher education to update you about procedures. If there was any attitude problem which seeped in over the years due to personal problems or whatever, the airline did not have a course correction for this. It was suggested that we undergo counselling…". (P9)

The Cabin Crew take pride in their appearance, calling themselves 'Vain and Posh' (P2); however, she would disassociate herself from the idea of youthfulness and instead focus on 'safety of passengers' and 'tactful ability to tackle difficult scenarios' kinds of 'experiences' as the skills which constitute a professional. A young Cabin Crew speaks in a very matter of fact about her role (P11) with most Cabin Crew emphasising 'Safety' as the dominant nature of their job, distancing herself from the identity of a servile bimbette image thrust on her by the management.

> "I am a flight attendant, I am a cabin crew in Air India. And basically people think that it is you should know how to serve tea, coffee, food and all that but that is actually the secondary thing;

> the primary thing is flight safety. You know the safety of passengers while travelling from point A to point B is important'
>
> "As we handle our 3 types of aircraft 747, 777 and Dreamliner 787 we train for these three flights for flight safety basics; working inside the aircraft and service wise it is all the same, you know, but the flight safety factors are different. So we are trained with safety as the prime focus for cabin crew or anybody who's flying in the aircraft. That's a major subject, the first thing in your mind …service comes second …the flight safety factor has to be taken care of first". (P5)

It is not just the young who speak emphatically, the senior cabin crew accepts that grooming is required but at the same time, negates youthfulness as the pre-requisite for cabin crew and blames it as a cultural expectation but not a professional criterion.

> "Little glam doll, look presentable - this is part of the South Asian mentality somehow to have these little bimbette, you know pretty young girls; so I am not young anymore but they still expect the prettiness and daintiness which I think is only a South Asian concept not prevalent in the west at all; but yeah, they expect you to be well groomed, which is fair enough, being in a service industry and you know you have to take care yourself. Also I am a bit of a vain person so it is not too much of an effort for me you know to do it, the physical appearance part of it. The passengers sometimes they see me as a very nice warm middle aged person, if I may say so, a posh, sophisticated lady. And sometimes they see me as a stern person just telling them off and quoting rules and regulations. Much depends on how you see the passenger load and how I am dealing with it and what my mood swing that day is all about".

Another crew member, while stressing on safety, puts comfort of the passenger as dependent on the equipment and facilities provided by the airline, which often fail him but he still struggles to meet passenger expectations.

> "I am on board the aircraft to see that my prime job function would be the safety and security of the passenger we carry; secondly, to provide them comfort from their starting point till they reach their destination in the best possible manner given the kind of equipment we have and the kind of constraints with lot of things we have and it has to be up to individuals to take that extra step to see that the passengers are comfortable, happy and probably would think of traveling back again on the airline - that would be the prime objective of my job function". P 4

The crew struggle with the image that is entrenched in not only the travelling public but also society as well. The families are not comfortable with the servile, glamourous image and so the crew use their working on VIP flights to bolster their credibility in the eyes of family members.

> But my husband and my older one say that how long you will do this work. Initially he was kind of embarrassed at telling his friends that I am a hostess. When I started doing VIP flights and when I started taking pictures and I showed my pictures with the President and with the Prime Minister, then he says okay this is some good job that you are doing. It has some importance and then he felt little good. P 7

Despite the work life issues and isolation of mobile work, the crew imbibe the professional discourse of separation of work and home. A professional would not let her home affect the task, more so in a service industry is the kind of cover one uses to cope with the harsh realities…

> "It is all as I would say it is all in the state of mind, now I have chosen this job, I enjoy my job so when I come for my duty I have to leave all my troubles behind, what is going on in my personal life, my home or anything else, behind. My only focus should be my job for that period of time I am on the aircraft - I think nobody should get personal problems mixed up with work time. The minute you do that then there is bound to be some conflicts somewhere and nobody I

> mean I don't think anybody would be able to discharge their duties in a very professional manner, the minute you have such things in your mind". (P4 Senior Cabin Crew)

The space of the aircraft is appropriated for discussions, complaints, defiance and withdrawal when experiencing the turbulence of repressive policies which ignore wage agreements, violate regulatory norms, ignore well-being and endanger professional growth. Even the sterile cockpit which is insulated from the outside world, is not spared. The pilots pride themselves in keeping most conversations light and non-controversial in the cockpit with the discourse of CRM writ large in all interactions. But the confined space now offers no escape form the vagaries of external realities.

"a demoralised pilot is a dangerous pilot" (P51)

The cabin has become a contested terrain. In contrast to the SOP for the pilots, there are few written rules for cabin crew, other than the reinforcing of the flight safety procedures through refreshers. The crew variously interpret the expectations in terms of the service, especially the quality aspect of service. A senior CIC shares her helplessness in enforcing the standards of service (P6)

> "People don't want to work, just do the basic service as I do not want to work because there is a 25% income cut. I will work only this much - I mean this is the way people are talking. As a CIC you try and pull them up but again, they have answers for everything, and the junior lot are more frustrated. The senior lot are much better and are performing all laid down procedures and services, we have respect for our seniors. I think the juniors don't accept that approach - - they simply say - I am not doing this and if you want to write in the report, go ahead and do it. They are not worried. They quote rules and I have not been paid this and so I am not doing this . We say ok. What can we do? You can push the person to some extent after that I can't pick up his

> hand and make him work. He has answers like I don't have equipment and I don't have this and the cart is not moving, this is not moving. What you will say if the company has not given proper equipment, if company has not given proper rest or the company has not given proper leave and the crew member is coming on board. What can I do in that situation?"

The conversations in the aircraft are of despondency and rumours around simple, and routine tasks such as opening the door, resulting in accidents. Instances of leave refusal and maltreatment by managers give rise to many stories, often told with great detail, leaving the crew embittered and anxious. This coming together in misery is brought about by rumour-mongering, complaining and instances of refusals being celebrated.

> "Physically you are tired most of the time .At least it's not happened to me but I know many people who have opened the doors in automatic because of the fatigue factor. The response level is very low, you are not getting enough rest even in the aircraft, you are not getting rest if you are doing 16 hour flights, you are not getting your 5 hours horizontal rest" (P43)

> "One narrow bodied commander told me, it happened to him; he asked for leave saying his mother is old, her health is not okay. I need some leave, or I need to change a flight or something. He was told that these things keep on happening all the time, you know your mother is old, it will keep on happening, how many days are you going to stay at home? You can't be all the time affected. Whatever you are doing you have to manage. They are actually saying stuff like this ….So basically he told them that you can terminate me, you can charge me, you can do whatever but I have to go on leave because my mother is there and I am the only person who can take care of her. Do what you want; I think these top-level people have become very anti low-level people" P31

The response then is one of withdrawal of all graciousness in service. Still burdened with habit, the crew withdraws what she considers is beyond her basic duty.

> On the clock on the aisle, every aisle, I still walk around with a bottle of water and glasses and you know I still do that. I still clean my aisle; if you come on my flight you will see one aisle will be clean all that time; there will be no tissues, there will be no paper, there will be no nothing in my aisle. I do not do it on other people's aisles anymore. (Emphasis her own P2)

The crew cloak their frustration in sarcasm and humour, not allowing the manager to debase their dignity. They destabilise his right to discipline them by discrediting him by labelling him for his non-existent managerial skills and the illegality of his position.

> "One of your promotions came three-four years back senior cabin crew in which all my counterparts, everybody has got in Chennai but not got in Bombay - we have written E-mails. We have made complaints, there is no reply to any of these E-mails, A lot of people have been given letters; I called him on phone, he is saying a panel has been set up, I said a panel has been set up for clearing my deputy chief cabin crew promotion? You see you are all 40 of you and a panel is in set up and is in process? A lot of people went and fought with him; still nothing is happening. They will just target you; they will give you bad flights, they will harass you. He is a manager who is not approachable, as a cabin crew if I have some problems, if I have to go and speak to M or any of my managers, he should be approachable. I should be comfortable when I am talking to him, that comfort level is not there, he will just hit back at you for even small matters. Even if you want whatever, you will think ten times before we want to go to Mr. M unless it is really important, otherwise he will find every fault in you, he will snub you, he will insult you and you will not feel like entering his office ever, ever again. (Woman Cabin Crew P 19)

The Uniform becomes a symbol of enslavement and is discarded, abused., ridiculed and used as a leverage. The crew treat the visual symbol with ambivalence, rejecting the stature it gives at the same time accepting its role in the performance of their professional identity.Ridiculing their own appearance, the crew wear ill-fitting uniforms, refusing to alter them. Gone are the elegant sarees, instead they now wear the androgynous looking trousers and jacket.

> "I look like the granny from the homeless shelter in Central Park". The senior crew has all the years of her service worn the saree, but now adopts the trouser for its convenience due to the pressure of working with less than needed crew inflight.
>
> "I met a guy day before yesterday, and he was wearing old uniform then I asked him why you haven't got the new one stitched. He said until the company gives me money, I will not stitch my new uniform. So, a section of people has decided that the company may introduce the new uniform but they will not wear it and they have their own reasons so they will not wear it. As a CIC what do you do - Yes, there is a circular which says anyone wearing old uniform will put them in economy. So, you send them to work in economy but still they are not affected. They are happy to work in economy. If the company was strong it would tell the person who is not wearing a uniform will not be allowed on board but where is it happening? P 6

P 20 echo's her frustration - this negation by the crew, lamenting that 'they are not reimbursing the money, so right now first time in the history of the airline people are coming in two different uniforms, this is what they have done" assigning the blame of this problem on the airline, on the management and not on the crew.

As the management uses ambiguous terms like reserve, NTS to keep the crew on ground, without any enquiry, *"leaving the crew to guess what they may have done" (P47)* and they are losing money each day spent on the ground. Management is avoiding the legal processes of

discipline in favour of a dictatorial one. And so the crew pick up a similar ambiguous narrative to punish the management. In the absence of overt support for strike action, the crew adopt the precarity of their health as a weapon to 'report sick' in concert. If adopted widely and for long, this can be termed as a call for strike and legal consequences of an illegal strike will follow. Though this is something the crew would know, the very fact that the option is available and considered, amounts to failure on the part of the management to manage.

> I look at it as a poor management because I see my husband's company - when he says this is to be done then it has to be done. You can have your grievances; you can go anywhere wherever you have your grievances you can go but if a rule is laid down then it has to be followed. Why are we opposing? So I feel it is because of poor management we are opposing everything whether it is duty time, flying time, whether it is uniform or whether it is a hotel. We are unhappy with every decision that the management does. (P6)

What is happening here employees are re-inscribing meaning to their opposition as something which is the outcome of 'poor management' where the crew is a normal employee who wants to follow rules, but the management makes it difficult for everyone through their acts of omission and commission.

Aero-mobile personnel in the flying crew and cabin crew categories have seen their lives transition from a *techno-social compact* which helped them work with pride and commitment in managing difficult issues related to spatiality, temporality and corporeality given the nature of their nomadic identities to a *techno-managerial hegemony* in the name of efficiency, productivity and profitability. This has changed the very nature of their functioning with major negative impact on their professional standing. On the one hand the demands on their roles and responsibilities have increased manifold due to technological advances as well as

organizational-managerial stridency articulated in terms of increased workload, reduced remuneration, heightened job insecurity, compromises on personnel safety standards and militant actions to snuff out collective-representative voice mechanisms. Sustained assault on the dignity and respect of aero-mobile personnel has only resulted in the *broken subjectivities* of individualized and localized resistance which on the one hand is acknowledged as behaviour unbecoming of a "professional" but is justified as behaviour which is brought on by the actions of recalcitrant regimes of despotic managerialism.

5.4 Subversive Hospitality

The crew feel 'at home' inside the aircraft as it moves with the hum of a lullaby, or the drone of a thousand drums, mostly placid as it pierces the shape of the space in front of it but sometimes the space is hesitant and unyielding, making the movement forward labourious. As a host it is their duty, an obligation to make all whom they welcome inside this space, comfortable at 35000 feet. From the smiling cabin crew at the door of the aircraft, to the pilots address through inflight announcements, the crew follow prescribed scripts to make the passenger welcome inside this metal capsule, serve an experience which will make him for a while , forget the world outside.

"You should dress up for yourself, if you do that then the person in front of you will give you that respect. For that you should do it. Even passengers will give you respect. Pleasant demeanour, hair away from face, clean good hygiene. Flight safety is better now, that is the

main reason you are there, your primary job is Flight safety, food etc is all extra." P 45 Executive Cabin Crew Female, Management Cadre.

"There my role now here is firstly to make sure that he is comfortable and that I am able to make him comfortable with whatever resources I have there, which are limited so I think it is very important because he may have gone through whatever experiences but now before he gets off the aircraft it's very important that he goes as a satisfied customer." P 7 Female Cabin Crew

But the crew does not accept that the best way to do so is through service alone, she focuses the near impossibility of the flight and the precariousness of it by repeatedly bringing the attention back to the safety of the passenger and her prime role in ensuring it.

> " It's always been showcased like that but there is lot of work not only hospitality lots of work that goes in. And for us the prime function is not to look good but the prime function is to first clear our flight safetylike if I don't clear my flight safety so I cannot fly. So, hospitality and all is actually secondary." P 43 Female Cabin Crew

The interiors of the aircraft allow a peek through the oval windows to the world below and around evoking wonder at the human gumption to lift this massive structure like a feather caught in the wind. But once the gaze moves inside, the cramped space, the elbow to elbow jostling, the narrow aisles and even more narrow toilets bring the inhabitants to the 'ground' reality of the commodification of aviation. The passenger now is not the guest that the host wants to welcome.

> "There's a doomsday happening, the scum of the earth. That kind of people. That breed of people are travelling now." P 10, Male Cabin Crew

The cabin crew face the passenger, who as a guest, refuses to accept the behaviour norms set by the host as she welcomes them. This hostile guest, the passenger, makes it extremely

difficult for the host to inhabit her own home. He does not accept her offer of invitation to be the guest, instead occupying the space with the right bestowed by the act of buying the airline ticket.

> "The thing is, (level) of passengers, the class has gone very low. They think that they need the 'on time performances', I agree, I completely agree. I (also) have to be on time. But when there are various departments responsible for the delay right, that it could be technical, there could be weather, there could be so many other reasons. I am in the cabin, we have an announcement I tell them, this that (the reasons). You are holding one cabin crew whom you see in the cabin (responsible), and like 50 passengers are bludgeoning on you, you know 140 economy passengers. You (cannot even) imagine and I have faced it. You just feel like opening the door and running out. P 19

The helplessness of the cabin crew as they feel squeezed between both the airline management who restricts the resources, both men and material leading to delays and deficient service and the belligerent passenger who demands continuously, finds an outlet in a rant. Evoking the past as a cabin crew, a female cabin crew, not a co-worker, lets out a barrage of angst laden speech.

> "passenger shouting, everybody is shouting, you tell them good morning, good evening sir, *what so good about the evening shouting !),* just like that. On the door we say good evening sir and we say good evening sir, what so good about the evening, so okay namaskar (India greeting of welcome with folded hands). So we say only namaskar that is the best thing, keep your hands and say namaskar at least they don't bother you, because good morning and good evening they will say what is tgood about the morning, what is good about the evening, your flights are always delayed and you are just smiling for the flights are delayed. What can you tell this, this is the

> class of passenger that has gone low, you know Seema (researcher) forget about that management is harassing you in a different way, they are all together (in harassing me)." P 19

The new management discourse of efficiency has led to cost-cutting measures including reducing the number of cabin crew assigned to a flight without any curtailment of service norms both explicit and implicit. The crew feels burdened to support this but are helpless.

> "Passengers are going to suffer if 5 people are going to serve 303 passengers on a full loaded aircraft. The service is going to go on and on, so passengers are going to suffer. For them (passengers) they have paid money so obviously they need service for which they have paid for. P 43 Female Cabin Crew

The suspension in mid-air of the aircraft means that the crew cannot 'run out' and struggle with to ensure the comfort and safety of the passenger with the resources that are available to them on board. They cannot seek any help from the outside and the cocooned space inside creates a co-dependency amongst them as well as extending themselves to deliver. To make this happen, they are required to not only to put their training into practice but put their very 'soul' (Willmott 1993) into performing the act of the host.

> " Work is basically if you (see) very broadly it is customer service. I am on board the aircraft to see that my prime job function would be the safety and security of the passenger we carry secondly is to provide them comfort from their starting point till they reach their destination in the best possible manner given the kind of equipment we have and the kind of constraints with lot of things we have and it has to be individual that we go and take that extra step to see that the passengers are comfortable, happy and probably would think of traveling back again on the airline, that would be the prime objective of my job function and secondary comes along with it

> where in you know there is things of maintaining inventory and things but those are secondary, the primary thing I would say is flight safety and comfort of passengers." Male Cabin Crew P 4

> "It's so ingrained in us from so many years like if passengers don't get their meal, we will not allow them to go hungry from our flights. We will try our best to get food from anywhere and serve them." P 19

Thus, the very condition on which the host had welcomed the guest, the limitations that she had imposed on the guest to manage her house, to be able to offer him the hospitality, are violated, leaving her with disgust at the possibility of offering them the hospitality.

> " Basically anything whatever happens, let it be technical delays, let it be catering, nowadays catering, they have made a thing you know TTS, like Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday they give us less of non-vegetarians (meal), like say for a flight of 170 (passengers) they give us only 40 non vegetarians. So other non-vegetarians come and shout at us, scream at us in front of all passengers. A lady serving you, have some courtesy, forget about a lady, He was screaming at her, 'you are not giving me non veg, I don't know anything you get my non veg, from wherever you get it you get my non veg,' and we do not have to serve you non veg and I am here for your safety but they don't understand, they say I want my non veg, I want my veg, I want my …..(abusing the passenger in Hindi) , I want this. I don't know how I supposed to be answerable, we do not have (abusing) …. sorry, we are not on ground. But they fail to listen." P 19 Cabin Crew Female

The 'alienated subject' suppressed through power (Foucault) recognizes the larger issue of inequality in her circumstance. But still she asserts and refuses to accept the identity imposed by the management. At once accepting and rejecting her role as the host, she reimagines it.

While encountering the same disrespectful and aggressive stance of the passenger and feeling the abandonment from her employer, a senior management Executive female Cabin crew (P 45) calmly says,

> "Firmness does not mean nastiness, it can be with a smile. With a pleasant demeanour. This can be done easily. Your body language should show you are firm" P 45
>
> The operating crew appropriate the discourse of hospitality and reinterpret it is safety as the concern which is galvanising them to come together. Thus their voice is not only being used to maintain their concern for self but also to give voice to the passenger and thus they are doing this for the larger good of the organization.

> "Then progression issue, merger issues. There would not have been at one point of time where they would have merged together and there would be chaos in the cockpit which takes Star Alliance passenger in an unsafe environment, right, so when you quote these points forward they did not take it, or that they did not take it seriously. I was not going to derail Air India and Star Alliance, but I will put forth these points, let us see how he (CMD) reacts but I have to put it cautiously so that he understands that he needs this department, needs (to take this) towards, so that my first class passengers, 140 million Star Alliance members, do not suffer. So, we need to have a full collaboration of an airline into Star Alliance and that means safety norms are met." P 15 Pilot and ex- Union official speaking about the inconclusive talks with the management before the 2012 strike of the Indian Pilots Guild.

The cockpit where the man machine interface controls the dynamics, which is at all times monitored through the DFDR, BlackBox , recording not only the instruments but also the voices inside, is the sacred space of the pilot. "*We as in aviation (where there is) such deep seated malice. The only sanity is the cockpit. You are getting an aircraft to fly. Be Happy".* A

place where she is in control, but the management ideas of its use are different. The human has to be left outside and only the man-machine; the pilot is to occupy the space. But the human mind, body and society enters it. The host again regains the law of the household, the scope of its function, now as a human being and Indian human being.

> "Because we are human, Indian, in our cultural context, home will be brought at office and office will be brought home. It is the structure of the office; what is allowed in the office environment. If the structure is professional, then no... (But)In my office in this environment, it is allowed sometimes. Sometimes people have to unload. (They) Can do it elsewhere. (but)not in cockpit. It will become very depressive if not allowed to speak. But the person who is listening it has to cap it. It is human. It becomes very oppressive. It is our mind, it will keep visiting the same pathos we are suffering, it cannot be allowed fully but one has to be slightly empathic. Everywhere people are such... In the world... When I speak about myself my office is dispatch, or airport or cockpit... A lot of cribbing about flying. About personal things."

A kinship develops acknowledging the pain that the fellow pilots suffer, the lack of voice for their suffering. She decides that the cockpit can be one sanctuary where they can speak. Knowing that the voices are recorded has no effect on her decision, but when her sanity gets affected, then she may 'pull rank' as the senior captain and stop the discussions. But the need to unload and find others who have a similar pain gives a relief which she does not want to deprive her fellow pilots. But they are colleagues, bound by the similar issues, both personal and work related. They are not her friends and the acknowledgement that the talk should only be of work-related issues, which binds them, is established.

> "I as an individual I don't entertain much. It takes my bandwidth. I get very hassled, affected, that's why i kind of cap it.. They try to talk about all things. They talk more of pathos, Unko

> dukh batana chahte hain.(want to share their pain) I normally don't speak about my personal life in the cockpit, unless someone asks a pointed question then (I give a) brief answer.. You fly with strangers. They are not friends." P 40

Appropriating her role as the head of this household, the aircraft, the galley, the zone, the sector, she quotes International Conventions and Regulatory rules alongside airline circulars and laws of the destinations, which give her the sole responsibility of her fellow hosts and the guest.

> "As a pilot , I am generally responsible to make all the final decisions about anything related to the flight. As regards to international aviation law , as per the Tokyo Convention 1963 , Chapter 1 , article 1 , paragraph 3 an aircraft is considered to be "in flight" at any time from the moment when all its external doors are closed following embarkation until the moment when any such door is opened for disembarkation. The powers of the aircraft commander are defined as being "in flight" and hence the scope is adequately defined .The internationally adopted Tokyo convention mentioned above , thus confers wide powers to the Commander (PIC) of a flight ." P 44 Pilot and ex Union official

Discussing unruly passengers, who are not only a danger to themselves, or the collegial atmosphere which the aircraft space accords, but also to the life and wellbeing of the crew and passengers, she assumes full charge. Using the discourses which the management provides, she re-inscribes them to subdue and 'imprison' the unruly guest. With the collective strength of the crew, they combine forces to bring order to chaos.

> "In 747 old one, into London . This one guy wanted more drinks, we delayed it thinking it will be better for him. But we realised soon that he had his own bottle, was drinking from it.. Soon became more boisterous, other passengers stared getting uncomfortable. When we tried to talk to

> him, he became agitated, giving terrible bad words, hurling abuses at the girls (women cabin crew), very bad ones. And started lashing out at the boys (Men Cabin Crew /Purser). He was taken to the crew rest area, the boys pulled the blinds and give him blows. He started shouting out then and giving even more vulgar abuses at the girls. The boys told us to go away to the galley and they tied him up, give a few slaps. Doctor was called and he was given some injection to make him sleep. In London we got off, the passenger was taken into custody and so on We had a layover and when we returned, as I was doing namastey at the door, guess whom I see, the same guy. Lips swollen. He did not look me in the eye but I made him sit down told him sometimes it happens and drinking is not too bad but losing control is. I got him some ice cream from first class, give him some food but he never looked up" P 45 Female executive Cabin Crew

The aircraft, once airborne, is even more restricting than the prison. The crew and passengers are bound to each other till the duration of the flight. The rules of flying are not only imposed on the pilots or the cabin crew, they are also applied to the passenger. The man-machine brotherhood of the cockpit, the maternal-caretaker in the Cabin crew and the stationary-domestic in the Passenger, all have to follow the rules of their lanes, as they navigate the interiors of the cabin.

The cabin crew, in a bold solidarity fuelled act, re-inscribe their role as the host, who will discipline the passenger.

The management in collaboration with the state regulatory body have reduced the crew complement without any involvement of the employee unions or even associations. This trend of arbitrary, baseless reduction has continued in a downward spiral till only the minimum requirement of crew to man the doors in the case of emergency is met. The alienation of the crew is so intense that they consider themselves as 'the necessary evil', something the

management abhors and wants to cast aside. The crew see the ambiguity in the management, when the comfort of the passenger is ignored by it at the altar of efficiency with even the safety being reduced to the bare minimum.

> "I think we are necessary evil for them, unfortunately they cannot send an aircraft without us, if they just do away with us, and have some androids serving tea and coffee and more than that as you know all the DGCAs and FAAs of the world want the doors and evacuation if they could have a machine do it they would be more than happy, we are the necessary evil of the company as far as the management is concerned, absolutely." P 2

Despite all the assertions, the Indian Ethos of the 'guest is god' prevails. The crew takes her obligation as the provider and carer, her sacred duty. A senior cabin crew (P2) had been particularly candid and the researcher had spoken to her several times before, where she had shared her helplessness, angst and even hatred for both the airline and the passenger. Contrary to the earlier conversations, she turned a bit mellow in the last conversation.

> "You know I can talk about myself Seema I crib, bitch, wham, cry about it when I am can but I am of the school of thought that if I don my uniform I have accepted the pattern, I have accepted the flight, I have worn my uniform. I have reported for duty, now I have to deliver what I am supposed to deliver, that is how I work and that is how I have always worked that now finished, you know this is full stop we will continue further when we get a time to chat, cry or crib or complain about it, but right now the passenger does not know what I am going through. He does not deserve to know what I am going through, he deserves a smooth comfortable journey and that is what I will try my best to provide."

But she attributes this work ethic to not the airline training or culture, but to her family, which makes her who she is.

Researcher: “Where do think this feeling comes from?”

P 2: I think my upbringing Seema, it is nothing but my upbringing. Won’t give the company any credit , No this is totally what my parents have instilled in me and all the credit for it is only my parents and nobody else because that is what we were taught from childhood and that once you have committed to yourself to something you will try to give your 100%. You will at least try because then again there are restrictions, may be things are not available, the infrastructure is faulty or whatever, you know that is beside the point, but whatever you can do yourself you will do to the optimum you can.

Despite the treatment given by the airline, she cannot stop herself from doing her job well. But she is no longer the hostess, but just a worker.

“You know there are times when I have said I am not going to do it, they are not paying me enough you know why should I do it with they are cutting my money and then I felt guilty after it, and then I have not liked myself so I have learned from experience that it makes me happy at least more peaceful when I do what I have been conditioned to do, it gives me a feeling of satisfaction and you know of being at peace, so then I have decided that I am not going to cut on my work. I will do what I want to do which is the best every time that I can and I will not let this interfere with this because, though troubles it me that they cut my money, it troubles me they deny me leave, but I when do not do justice to the work on board that troubles me even more, and I have experienced it. I have also done things like, but I will not do it, I will say I not take the trolly then I do not like it, I do not like what I have done that day, and then I lose sleep over it and you know something eats me up from inside, so I stopped doing that.”

5.5 Insecure Volatility

“Jet Airways expects these difficult market conditions to continue for some time. Jet has been watching the situation for some time in the hope that it may turn around but has now reached

a stage at which some hard decisions are inevitable. As a consequence, personnel hired for the expansion, probationers and unconfirmed personnel, will have to be released." Chief Executive Officer Wolfgang Prock Schauer 2008 (Press Release)

> "Air India is seeking to reduce costs and lower its dependence on the government by cutting debt and aircraft leases/rentals and trimming staff and operational expenditure," Chairman and Managing director Rajiv Bansal 2018 (Press Release)

> "From where things stand currently, it is impossible for our company to fly through this economic storm without making some sacrifices in order to sustain our business. It is for the first time in the history of IndiGo that we have undertaken such a painful measure (of layoffs)." Chief Executive Officer Ranojoy Dutta 2020 (Press Release)

Aviation work is specialised labour, from the Pilots to the Engineers their skills are specific to the industry and sometimes even to an aircraft type. As the aviation industry grew, the skilled jobs of mobile workers have been much in demand. However, the airlines have not always had 'good-times', more often due to managerial vision which has taken undue risks and the repercussions have been faced by employees.

> "Its like the Titanic after hitting the iceberg and waiting for miracle to save you.. .. wishing things to be stopped..' … everybody is clueless (taking about the way the company situation is) 'having a volleyball coach for a cricket team and some loser plays and others wait…" P 3

The cabin crew, recruited at a young age, find themselves in another peculiar position, where youth is the currency which gets valued.

> "Unfortunately working is something I cannot quit, you know, I need the job, I need the money and I know it is physically quite tiresome to do the job that we do; you need to cut down on other frivolous activities of your life, you know you need to make sure and also we are at certain age now, we are not in our like 20s where we could jump around the whole night and then carry on working for 16 hours after that. So you are going to be a little curtailed, you make sure you rest well in your hotel, you know don't just faff around all the time, so you have to kind of do something about it to be able to take care of yourself otherwise you will just collapse one fine day." P 2

As they age, so do their responsibilities at home, having a job then is a necessity, not only for them especially if they are single women but for their families. The feeling of helplessness comes in when confronted with the prudent realities of their lives.

> "My older son has kidney problem, so he has been suffering with the kidney problem since age 13. … He is now 20 and his medical bills are huge. So he is on the road to recovery but I don't know how long it is going to take. So his bills are quite high and then we have made other investments, so taking all that into account…I mean my husband and I sat and we worked out on an average in the whole year how much is our expenditure is in a month. … So we came up with some ridiculous amount and I said him do you still want me to quit. And then he was mulling over it and he is still mulling but the thing is that he said that if you are going to fly all the time and you won't have any time for us, you know because he is a man of simple needs" -P 7

> "We are here if you go to see only for money because we are running our family so at the end of the day we are just for money here because the safety aspect is gone, that passenger profile has gone and management is equally treating you badly, so basically from all sides you are

> bombarded you know, so basically there is nothing to look forward to in this job, if you really see." P 19

The resultant insecurity has made them do dangerous, unlawful criminal activities, which not only put their jobs in danger but also their lives if caught.

> " I had some of these CCs who came to me and said you know ma'am for years we were not doing uncle shopping(jargon for smuggling) but now we are getting into it because there is no payment coming in for a very long time - payment was deferred by about 4 months.. salary is up to date but the allowance that I got was for October so they are indulging into all that because we have EMIs to pay and we have a lot of other whatever issues so they are getting into that - but each person has a different reason." P 8

The insecurity is related to the job and also to the income, as the mobile crew emoluments are linked to being on flights. By keeping them away from flights using the ambiguities of rules, the crew are deprived of their earnings. They are harassed by calling them to the office, where they just sit and worry about the explanations they would give. The absence of the union troubles them the most as the management now behaves in the most autocratic manner, unilaterally deciding the punishments. Even the judiciary does not evoke any confidence in the worker due to the long process and the complexities of the legal system.

> "Earlier there was the union, we have any problem we would ask them we would call them from outstations but… today we do not have the union, nobody, I personally feel I do not feel comfortable that someone has the authority to tell me what I should think, so what do I do next …I follow the C.A.R… which is in writing given to me - 22hrs.

> "The main issue was the threat of losing their progression on to a wide bodied aircraft, boss FDTL has gone mad and scheduling is a mess. Fear of losing, yeah fear of losing money, progression." P 12

> "In 2014 the management terminated the 13 crew members who claimed bilateral rights and all that. Without inquiry they were issued termination letters directly and there was no one to guide them but basically the whole body was there to guide them. Everybody chooses to do something after sitting on the ground for a couple of months. All those Delhi Crew members chose to give an apology letter and wanted to come back to flight operations with sincerity. Of course they did not lose anything but they had to give up their bilateral rights individually in writing" P 21

The mobile worker than resists by not breaking the rule but by finding a way out within the rule. This is done by interpreting the rule and implementing the bare minimum with a view to ease the work "burden". For instance, the essential element in the food service is the food itself, but extra enhancements like the beverage and alcohol services, she chooses to curtail. She becomes "stony" as she moves within the cabin, choosing to shut herself from the demands of the passengers related to beverages and alcohol.

> "You can't do it .So people are scrapping services, Even executives are copying other airlines services but you need more crew. even 4 crew members are not just enough for your 35 passengers because there is plating of meals and all tha,t so earlier what we use to do we use to take out the whole trolley and in front of the passengers we use to do plating and all. Especially if you are working in economy, the galley is right at the back and with 300 passengers either you walk blindly like a deaf person and don't listen to anyone and go straight in the galley because if you listen to everybody you may get so many orders on your way". P 43

She is using the discourse of the management which is that only a bare minimum crew as per regulator norms are assigned per flight. Thus, anything she uses her discretion to interpret passenger amenities and services. Her anger at the situation simmers but so does her fear of reprisal at the hands of management based on customer complaints.

> "There are threats, they suspend people, they terminate people, they don't give you leave, they took away bidding, they have started the sham of request flights, you know you can request,, so our choice of flying went away, they either don't grant you the request or they grant you a request with a nice little gap ahead of the request so that you know you just end up getting pulled out before the flight you wanted to do.

Pilots also are worried that the insecurity would reduce their alertness and single minded focus on the operations of the flight. In some ways bringing the worst nightmare of flying accidents alive, pilots consider themselves so vulnerable that their mental equilibrium may snap anytime and make them machines of destruction. His fears are not unprecedented, as the German Wings air crash where the first officer lost his mental balance and intentionally flew the aircraft into the mountain, killing all on board.

> "As pilots we are very sincere people, there is no scope of doing anything else.. People have expenditure based on your earnings, when that is affected… If he is worried about his child's fees, house rent, .. it's not about luxury, it is all playing on his mind… the peaceful mind is not there now.. They are stressed out now, no peace,, sitting on a time bomb" P 41

The mobile worker understands airline operations and uses that knowledge to hurt the airline, financially and reputationally. Whereas the cabin crew create disturbances to incite the

passenger thus lowering the service standards of the airline, the pilots use their privilege and discretion to decide routes, fuel and cargo loads to show their protest.

> "What to do..union is doing something.. but then people also do covert action - for example- out of the two options which are given to us, we take the safer one which leads to higher fuel bills..or MEL or anything else - but we go by the book and do it. This way people show their unhappiness." P 41
>
> It is the management action they want to hurt, not the organization as they feel their specialised skills are dependent on the aircraft and thus the airline.
>
> "Some Carry more fuel, increase the cost of the company… But it Will hurt you more.."P 40 ..

The strike of 2013, which was against income insecurity, was ridiculed by the troika of management, Government and the consumer. The minister chose to go to London on a personal visit when the pilots were protesting in 'Jantar Mantar' a common civil protest site in Delhi.

> "Ajit Singh (Minister of Civil Aviation in Government of India) made a statement that two days fasting is good for body health, so pilots also can do that. He told the press so and he went (to London on a private visit); however by the fifth day few of our people started to go into hospitals because they continued their agitation, one guy did it for 9 days…Yeah 9 days so he was in ICU after that for some time, it was critical and the long term implications of more than 48 hours hunger strike is directly on the lungs, the kidneys and the liver." P 12

Strike action across the country is increasing although it has become impossible to strike legally and to mobilize practically, since with ACEU derecognition, and the unions being decapitated, hounded, union accounts frozen and their membership terrorised into acquiescence, formal

protest has become more difficult. But the narrative of the solidarity of the injustice still holds as they see the impact of this insecurity creeping into the cockpit.

> "It has impacted everyone, impacted the First officers more who don't have money to pay EMI for housing and there are Captains who are also in the same boat and there could be my colleagues whose kids are studying abroad and they're having financial problems so I know it is affecting a lot of people - and since it's a small fleet we've known each other for years"
>
> The mobile worker used sickness as the tool of her choice to slow down the march of subjugation. They create far fetched but plausible explanation for their mass illness which has the potential to bring the operations to a halt. Recalling an earlier incident, a senior pilot laughs at the lengths the crew went to mask their strike as sickness to avoid terminations.
>
> "They don't take us seriously, they don't take you seriously , because we are registered as a trust not as a union, yes? But you know we just reported sick, did it altogether as if it was an epidemic, since we all ate the same food at the union trust party and we had food poisoning. That's why people who were out station were not sick ." P 55

The fear of losing progression, income and the abject failure of the management to recognize their misery, made the fear of loss of job for a brief moment less important. As the collective community came together, the aggregated energy diffused through the crew fellowship, leading to an eruption of joint protest.

> "It was water begging to boil over', pressure was too much (He is recounting the final days before the 2013, 58 day strike); on the 6th night, management said," sign this - the grievance is all imaginary"; and then the Volcano erupted…it was a 'Domino Effect' - 150 reported sick (sick leave); by the third day ..it was burning… We (the committee) were willing to sacrifice ourselves." P 3

> "We had not had a committee meeting on it, we had not had an agreement on it, we were in fact in disagreement about going on a strike or declaring a strike and there was no committee meeting prior to taking that procedure. So people were directly contacted, members were directly contacted by four individuals that we are reporting sick and you report sick and people started following those. It was a chain reaction and like a cloud burst the crowd burst. In Bombay in the IPG office there were about 70 pilots who gathered because the negotiations were in the final phases and those 70 members are the ones who wanted to do something and one got to know that all 70 would report sick within 15 minutes; by the time I came to know there were already 70 people on strike and I am saying what are you doing J, you were supposed to call me, right, S and P in Delhi, or hell you are supposed to go and meet them, have a committee meeting, let us be mature about it we can't just do it. No, it is already done, what is done, if you just say it is already done, oops, there is not an oops, you cannot do oops, well it was oops, it was in reality, it was just oops." P 12

Collective action and the strike again was not something organized – it was just that a moment arrived when all the anger and the frustration and the bitterness on account of the insecurities and the indignities and the uncertainties which had been accumulating just about exploded into a spontaneous lightning strike which enveloped everyone and brought everything into a chaotic halt. Neither management or the union leadership could hold the dam from bursting.

The picture which emerges is that there has been a progressive trend as far as management orientation as well as actions towards its employees is concerned has been hostile, militant, anti-union, anti-employee. The broad strategy has been to use the strategic instruments like

mergers (of IA and AI), Restructuring through outsourcing, with the continuous shadow of privatization over-hanging the airline even as the visible policy is to hand over lucrative domestic as well as international routes and sectors to private and foreign airlines. At the functional level the airline management has been using every known insecurity producing instrument to target employees – assault on unions through de-recognition and closure of union offices, suspensions and terminations of union leaders, turning customers against mobile workers during strike action and playing up customer complaints against crew members, violating bilateral agreements and changing work norms, creating hurdles in progression policies and practices, reductions in layover time and family time to assault work-family balance, changing rules in order to reduce incomes and allowances, non-payment of dues in spite of communication of grievances, engaging in abusive and intimidatory behaviour towards workers – the list can go on.

The concerted assault of techno-managerial strategies of the airline is on the spatiality, temporality and corporeality dimensions of mobile working. The impact on the crew takes various forms – anger, frustration, lowered motivation and morale, alienation, a sense of powerlessness, meaninglessness and an acute sense of insecurity and ambiguity. Given the complexity of the task before the flying crew members and the worker unfriendly approach of management, the result is an atmosphere of simmering volatility. Resistance takes the form of non-formal subversion of roles and responsibilities within the space available for protest by complying with the rules and procedures but even as rules are implemented while simultaneously devising creative protests using “smart” tactics – the concerted action, outside

the ambit of the union, of simultaneously reporting sick which is permissible under the rules but with devastating consequences for operations – just to get the management to the negotiating table is an example.

5.6 Sacrificial Legal Figure

Airline work is body work. The body-identity nexus reifies at the same time resists the pressures of mobile work. Who is the 'good cabin crew' or a 'good pilot'? Through their bodies the mobile worker has resisted their subjection as the 'thin equals to fit equals to good pilot/cabin crew'. The insistence on the young, nubile female to best serve the needs of the aviation image, was a projection of the male gaze totally ignoring the actual composition of the passenger which had a sizeable number of women, children and elderly who were looking for a compassionate caregiver in the anxious, anxiety prone hours inside the aircraft.

Taking a gendered perspective to the resistance, the mostly individual resistance endures as the mobile worker creates solidarity through her very public struggle to regain her respect and reject the patriarchal gendered norms of her employment. Occupational subordinated segregation has been explained as an extension of subordination within the home. Indian legislations have prevented women from working in several professions supposedly to protect them from exploitation or harm . The constitutional vision of 'Equality before law and equal protection before law' is trampled on by the executive arm of the Government through its own legislations(Roy 2019).

As avenues within the organization to voice their concerns on this discrimination about working were less, the mobile worker took to civil society to raise her concerns and knocked at the judiciary's doors for justice.

P 54 is a senior cabin crew executive and one of the petitioners to the case challenging the subduing segregation norms within airlines. This is her narration.

> "I entered aviation when women were to leave at 30 years of age, stay single and not experience motherhood."

The long legal battle was supported by P 9, an executive female cabin crew and the head of the training centre at the public sector airline.

> "I joined at the age of 19. After 15 years I got promoted to the first management cadre as a deputy chief air hostess. After 20 years I became additional Chief Air Hostess. Then these designations were abrogated, in 1996 I became a senior manager. After that there was some problem with the promotions policy in the organization, so I stagnated at this level and retired. Had the stagnation not taken place, I would have become a deputy general manager and when I retired, I had completed 39 years of service." P 9

The airline management, the government as well as the judiciary subjugated the female cabin crew to an "object" to be used and then summarily disposed-off as if her life did not matter.

The views of the three parties views are culled from court records, interviews of the participants and news reports.

The governments misogynistic views were articulated by Senior Counsel Soli Sorabjee, when he said: *"How would you like to be served by a 58 year old woman?" P 46* while Shahnawaz Hussain (the then Civil Aviation Minister) had said, "We want Ms. India not Mother India" P 9

The airline in its submission before the court in the Nergeesh Mirza case (1981) had advanced the argument along the following lines:

> "They have to deal with passengers of various temperaments, and a young and attractive air hostess is able to cope with difficult or awkward situations more competently and more easily than an older person with less personal prepossessions."

In an earlier award by the Mahesh Chandra Tribunal, the Tribunal had contended that:

> "The social conditions in Europe and elsewhere are different from the social conditions in India. The work of an air hostess involves running hither and thither and flying at the same time. In case of an air hostess, her appearance, glamour and weight are important. The working hours are also odd. She has to walk up and down the aisles and has to be away from home for a number of days at a time. All this will not suit an Indian married woman and also places the category of an air hostess on an entirely different level from all those employed in a pharmaceutical concern."

All arguments were imprisoning the woman in a patriarchy bound space, sometimes cloaking their arguments using "Indian cultural ethos", or other contentions on customer service and most others on what can be referred to as the "pure male gaze". The control over the body extended to everything on the body as well.

> "We were not allowed to wear earrings, not closed shoes even though the galley leaked and made our feet dirty, not allowed to show ourselves as mothers. We were treated as glamourous objects that did the work. We were told that the fresh supply of young women was steady ."P 54

The ageing body had no place in this 'use and throw' gendered ideology . The 'grey hair' on women was seen as 'hideous', but was seen as becoming on the man, even if his work too involved customer service. Even the female managers accepted this and harassed the ones who did not comply.

> " Dilbar Patel, Oh she was charming, but had White hair- that made her hideous! the IFS can have his own hair color but the AH was humiliated.. She was told to cut and color her hair.. all

> grey hair..He could have it but we were made to cry.. even in the office. I had a huge tiff in 1989.. with Persis Khambatta (manager) she had no hair herself, she had the gall to tell me to color or 'why don't you wear a wig'.How do you change that mindset"(P 54) says in anguish.

> "My strength to fight came from the upbringing, the equal status at home, being told that you are equal to any man on the earth. But the management was always male, they permitted this view to percolate to the aircraft, that the supervisory capacity was only in the male. One of our female crew under the pressure of her husband gave an affidavit that she cannot pick up the heavy food cages from the ovens. That we were there to entertain the passenger"

The injustice was deeply felt by the female crew who refused to accept the subjugation of her identity by the airline. It was as if they were shown their place in society, at the workplace, and at home. The spirit rebelled, it was the hurt of being abandoned by not only their employer but also their own colleagues, their co-mobile workers who laughed and cried with them. Some were spouses, who had been trained by these executive crew and who were respected for their work. It was not their capability that was being questioned, it was their gender.

> "We wanted harmony. But it was hurtful that someone who joined 20 years after you , was the one who you had to listen to.. it was humiliating. … basically the right you wanted, equality, economic reach..its the humiliation of 20 yrs junior (purser) above you, very offensive and demeaning.." (P 46 another original petitioner in the legal case on gender-based subjugation of cabin crew).

An earlier battle had been fought and some gains had come to the female crew from it. In the Nergeesh Mirza judgement (1981) Judge Fazl Ali stated,

"Having taken the AH in service and after having utilised her services for four years to terminate her service by the Management if she becomes pregnant amounts to compelling the poor AH not to have any children and thus interfere with and divert the ordinary course of human nature. The termination of the services of an AH under such circumstances is not only a callous and cruel act but an open insult to Indian womanhood the most sacrosanct and cherished institution. Such a course of action is extremely detestable and abhorrent to the notions of a civilised society. Apart from being grossly unethical, it smacks of a deep rooted sense of utter selfishness at the cost of all human values. Such a provision is not only manifestly unreasonable and arbitrary but contains the quality of unfairness and exhibits naked despotism and is clearly violative of Art. 14. Whether the woman after bearing children would continue in service or would find it difficult to look after the children is her personal matter and a problem which affects the AH concerned and the Corporation has nothing to do with the same. These are circumstances which happen in the normal course of business and cannot be helped. In these circumstances, the reasons given for imposing the bar are neither logical nor convincing."

Being ignored by the management, the female cabin crew created their own group, united in solidarity against the humiliation they faced and the injustice of it all.

> She continues "So Dilly, Mahrukh, Elfie, Sanober, and others joined together" P 46

The resources required for a legal battle needed the group to combine their strengths, often leaning on personal contacts to open doors for them.

> "The journey for equal rights had to be fought not only in the Indian courts but also in parliamentary committees. The long battle was fought due to her batch, 'the problem child' which

> did not accept the norms of 'one big happy family'. We were told to be 'my girl' and 'keep your mouth shut' by the senior managers in the airline as well as the union of the time. The women of the batch pooled in financial resources along with personal contacts in the ministry, politicians and judiciary and created a collective to resist this inequality. It was not just a question of fighting for the gender; it had practical monetary implications as well. The early retirement age deprived us of a job and earnings. The segregation of the mobile worker continued as we became a 'ground worker' with the administration of men and women employees being run with different rules. With an agreement with the union, the flying age was capped at 35 with compulsory grounding after that and suddenly we found ourselves being stopped from flying. We were not heard in the tribunal as we were not considered workman, having taken promotions earlier. I was approached individually to settle but it was for all women. I was told you all cannot fight." P 54

The strength of the collective grew in time and also 'fresh supply' to use the term derogatively used for the women cabin crew, ensured that the fires never died.

> "As a group of people, as a group of people who got together. In 1980 one sole lady went to the court challenging management's service condition that we should retire, stop flying at the age of 45, which eventually became 50 but every time it was a group of individuals who filed the petition. In 2001, another group of individuals of which I was a part, filed a petition and this petition gave us interim relief and it did not restore our seniority but it allowed us to fly. Dawn, Coleen, Christene Ramgopalan, Surekha Wagh they all got grounded. Then after that Shehnaz Mistry, Neelam Khori as a line hostess she never accepted her promotions. So as a line hostess (she filed)."

The perseverance saw them approach five prime ministers offices, numerous legal luminaries many of whom fought the cases pro-bono, senior officials of the management, parliamentarians and even the office of the President of India.

In a prosaic, matter of fact manner P 54 sighs "*nothing comes to you in normal course"* underling the struggle they have endured. A sense of 'great gratification' comes to the group of these women as they appreciate all those who supported them. The long year of testifying before parliamentary committees, before the tribunal, the labour courts, the will and optimism did not dampen. *"I would win, that was for sure" P 54*

The enthusiasm was more bravado as the group lost their case in the supreme court.

> "The Supreme Court Judgement was a huge blow. (The SC Judgement did not give them relief) then we said what is the next strategy. The President of India was approached, he spoke to the big-wigs." P 46

The legal 'figure' was a sacrificial ceremonial goat, its offering paved the way for solidarity of the women cabin crew. The narrative was no longer about equality in the job role of the woman cabin crew but about the position of women in society, even as we approached the 21st Century. The debate galvanised the cadres and eventually shamed the management into finding a way out of the mess created across two decades of litigation in the public eye. The Presidential order eventually removed all vestiges of occupational subjugated segregation.

But the body had another battle to win, the battle of the bulge, which too was fought in the public eye with the judiciary playing a vital role.

The key insight which emerges from the narratives of women crew members and their gendered experiences in the mobile work context is that the whole airline organizational-managerial discourse revolves around what has been termed time and again as the "male gaze". The reality of the "male gaze" defines the relationship between the female body and the constructions of power in airline organizations in turning the "male gaze" centric undercurrent into defining the

roles and responsibilities of women crew members. Socialization processes in the larger society, human resource policies and practices related to role descriptions and selection criteria, organizational induction processes at the point of entry into organizations tend to inculcate and reinforce a “male gaze” centric dynamic. Traditionally women have also tended to internalize these body-centric power relations till the very “otherness” which constitutes the “male gaze” begins to get sensitized to the inequities relative to men cabin crew which prevail in organizations in relations to the terms and conditions of work like the age of retirement, questions of marriage and family, motherhood and child care roles. The “invisible” and the “latent” male gaze undercurrent when seen in terms of gendered inequities in the “visible” and “manifest” terms and conditions relative to men cabin crew, the iniquitous policies and practices trigger not only the impetus to put up a struggle against those inequities within the organization but also to revolt against the objectification of the female body even in the larger society. A few members of the women cabin crew category have not only launched a campaign to dismantle gendered inequities within the airline primarily through legal action but also to show up the masculine perspective which keeps them embodied.

5.7 Conclusion

Institutionalist theories attribute power & resistance to the structure, Marxists attribute it to agency, Post-structuralists have negated both. The narratives have highlighted that trade unions are the traditional mode of worker representation, but they are under siege. With their absence, the mobile workers have articulated the performances of collectives for solidarity and protection from retaliation. The narrative supports the deployment of sovereign power though actual surveillance-technology, supervisory control and customer checks. Foucault(1970)

disciplinary power constructs the pliable subject who then consents self exploitation but also resists at the level of subjectivities. The narratives highlight the consent is also extracted through sovereign power thus it is also reified ‘deadly embrace.

6 Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The mobile workers of civil aviation in India in the study are experiencing intense expansion under the neo-liberal agenda of the government, strategic militant posturing of the management and a concurrent decline of workers representative institutions. The purpose of this qualitative study through the post-structuralist lens, was to access the enactment, performed collectivization and resistance of mobile workers as she struggles with the impediments towards collective action, the accelerated pace of travel, the neo-liberal policies of the government cloaked as the logic of markets (Laurie and Bondi 2005) and the gendered politics of aviation, all of which produce new forms of subjectivity and disciplinary regimes of power(Knights and Willmott 1989).

This chapter includes a discussion of the major findings detailed in chapter 5, as related to understanding the morphology of the changes in the context of mobile work, and the mobile workers experience and response to the subjugation. Also included is the linking of the themes uncovered in the findings with Michael Foucault’s writings on power, control, subject and

resistance (Foucault 1982, 1990,1991; Butler 1995,1997;Thomas and Davis 2005) which provided the theoretical lens and as a guide to interpretation of data.

The theory of how organizations discipline the subjectivities of employees and how employees collectivize and resist as seen through the post-structuralist lens have yielded five interlinked findings captioned as nomadic solidarities, broken subjectivities, subversive hospitality, insecure volatility and sacrificial legal figure and this chapter will link these to the research objectives and questions.

6.2 Discussion Of Key Findings

The lived experiences of the mobile worker articulated in Chapter five speak of the stark managerial mechanisms to discipline the spatiality, temporality and the materiality of the mobile worker, the marginalization of the collective and the yearnings for its past virility by them and the performances of defying these 'good soldier' discourses. The experiences of the participants is varied with the five interlinked frames captioned as nomadic solidarities, broken subjectivities, subversive hospitality, insecure volatility and sacrificial legal figure providing the source of the findings. The overarching finding of the thesis is that the organizations conduct a combined onslaught of sovereign and disciplinary power on the mobile worker, at once creating subject positions of a host, a nomad whose body, time and movement is cruelly and intensely controlled. The sovereign power unleashes all its forces of law, rules and punishments to coerce acceptance of the subject position of dispensable nomadic professional whose very existence both at work and at rest,is subject to the will of the sovereign. Along with

it the disciplinary power normalizes the union suppression, the standardized aviator, the agency less host and gendered airline, thus legitimizing its hybridized control and exploitation of the mobile worker. The mobile workers challenge to sovereign power is suppressed but the micro-resistances subvert these subject positions by adapting these to become the hostile host, the professional nomad and the sacrificial lamb. She negates the narrative of the obedient, pliable, robotic-fleshless-worker, to become the champion of the flight, of the machine and the human cargo it carries. These resisting actions flow through the body, with all its bio-complexities and visibility.

The findings of the study addressed the three research questions which guided this study:

RQ 1 How do organizational discourses discipline the subjectivities of employees by constructing formalities of time, space and body?

RQ 2 How do employees' mobilize discourse and practices of collectivization to disrupt organizational Normality?

RQ 3 How does the performance of collectivization & resistance reconstitute contradictions subjectivities that defy and legitimize organizational control?

Discipline, Power and Control:

The aviation organizations management is inseparable from the political and the politician. The new public management agenda is, however, protracted. With a strained industry, there are few buyers or partners, it continues to drift. The new public management with its narrative of state assets utilization, best achieved through disinvestment or privatization hands the organization 'the argument of convenience', that is, in order to survive, the organization takes

any steps it deems fit to galvanize itself to responsibly utilize public and shareholder money. Thus, the sovereign power invoking the 'right of rejoinder' (Foucault 1990) exposes the life of the employee for its own survival. If an employee was to directly challenge the rules, it punishes them using the power of *deduction*, by taking away her control over her time, things, body and ultimately life itself (Foucault 1990). But to do so unhindered, our findings show, first it systematically dismantles the workers institutions which could challenge the organizations actions and hold it accountable. The dismantling occurs with the active involvement, convenient absence and feigned ignorance of the state actors. The de-recognition and closing of union offices takes place swiftly with the freezing of the accounts of the union, thus crippling its activities (see accounts of mobile workers in chapter 5). When this action is challenged by the unions, the state apparatus of labour machinery works at a snails pace thus creating an increased vulnerability and insecurity in the workers. This ambiguity of the in-between state has legal and sociological effects for the affected as seen in the case the half-widows of Kashmir (Qutab 2012, D'Souza 2015) who are denied legal status of widow and the sociological sanction to marry again. The case of delayed compensation to workers (Bhowmik and More 2002), delayed reinstatement of service and judgements taking decades, illustrate the strategic use of ambiguity to withhold the rights and thus display the might of the sovereign.

Though the unions status of recognition was re-conferred in some cases and their offices reopened, the damage to the worker was done and the remaining unions disciplined with little scope for them to defend the wage agreements, bilateral norms and practices achieved earlier through collective bargaining. The role of the bilateral agreements was crucial to the mobile

worker. She inhabits a dynamic, unnatural aero-mobile spatiality ,an unnatural life-world, confined in aero-mobile "capsules" which is the aircraft in motion. She has to face the physical, psychological consequences of aero-mobile temporality on account of movement through various time zones as they transit from the point of departure to the point of destination especially after the advent of long haul flights.

This defiance of natural ways characterizes aero-mobile working and it continuance requires careful nurturing of the body to withstand its harmful effects. The unions composed of these mobile workers lived this reality and doggedly protected themselves through collective-bargaining. The vestiges of rules which constrained the organization from making changes to the working conditions, the legally sanctioned wage agreements which were as a result of protracted bilateral discussions, were now ignored. "It is a very hostile environment as far as management is concerned; there are threats, they suspend people, they terminate people, they don't give you leave, they took away bidding, so our choice of flying went away". These 'bilaterals' were the result of the unions long championing of the mobile workers peculiar work and worksite. These included rules of progression, type of aircraft assignments, allowances including minimum flying allowance and the most contentious, rules of flight & rest times and the rule to self-assign flights. This system of assigning flight duties 'bidding' managed by the unions, had mitigated the negative consequences of this air borne spatiality and temporality, through the involvement of mobile worker collective organizations and collective voice in managing work allocative structures and processes. This had led to better management of crew scheduling keeping work-life imbalance concerns in view. The organization to deploy its

powers on the body of the mobile worker, seeks control over the movement of the body. The 'bilaterals' constrain this power to subjugate the body. Thus, using the same 'argument of convenience' of survival, the organization deploys its brutal power to discipline the movement and rest of the mobile worker. It uses its *juridico-institutional power* to impose its will. The techno-social practices and norms in the 'bilaterals' were dramatically replaced by software driven techno-managerial resource allocative methods, thus disrupting the social contract between management and employees. It led to traumatizing the aero-mobile working but also led to enhanced work-family fissures and ruptures. Marriages were strained to the point of breaking, care responsibilities of parents and children irregular and health decayed rapidly. "I also don't have time, so we hardly meet. What is life then? Its better I leave him, or he leaves me".

With the legal bilateral agreements nullified, the brutality of the suppression to this new reality was evidenced by the abandoning of the crew in a hostile environment, putting at grave risk their safety (refer to the abandoning of crew in Jeddah and the fear it instilled in the other crew. Instances of denial of promotions, removal from flying duties due to their inability to conform to weight restrictions, withholding of monetary allowances, reduction of wages and the status of 'not to be scheduled' wherein the worker is not even communicated about the action, only left mobile workers in an ambiguous state, oscillating between hope and despair, waiting for the axe to fall. These punishments were often played out in public, with TV, newspapers, social media and leaking of names of the disciplined (Financial Express 2015, FirstPost 2015, India Today TV 2015)

The merger of two airline entities, forced on both by political diktats, resulted in cannibalization of the public airline. Slowly broken off and its parts removed, this restructuring and separation into MRO, AIATSL along with the forced fusion of Air India, and Air India dramatically and clinically changed the union presence, worker demographics, and hung a sword of insecurity over the mobile worker. Faced with its membership reduced, geographically dispersed and separated into other organizations, dismantling the institutions that could hold the organization accountable speeded up its march towards total control over the body of the worker. The picture which emerges is that there has been a progressive trend as far as management orientation as well as actions towards its employees towards a hostile, militant, anti-union, anti-employee. The broad strategy has been to use the strategic instruments like mergers (of IA and AI), restructuring through outsourcing, with the continuous shadow of privatization over-hanging the airline even as the visible policy has been to hand over lucrative domestic as well as international routes and sectors to private and foreign airlines. At the functional level the airline management has been using every known insecurity producing instrument to target employees – assault on unions through de-recognition and closure of union offices, suspensions and terminations of union leaders, turning customers against mobile workers during strike action and playing up customer complaints against crew members, violating bilateral agreements and changing work norms, creating hurdles in progression policies and practices, reductions in layover time and family time to assault work-family balance, changing rules in order to reduce incomes and allowances, non-payment of dues in spite of communication of grievances, engaging in abusive and intimidatory behaviour towards workers – the list can go on.

The aviation industry worldwide is choking, with the deep pockets of the Oil rich national airlines and their cheap fuel, the loss of country protection, both financial and operational and increased competition from new airlines with exploitative business models. Economic recession with its global reach has added to their woes.

“Many airlines have announced job cuts including cuts of categories who hitherto remained largely insulated i.e Pilots’ , Engineers and cabin crew . Many airlines like Virgin Australia and others have closed shop . Airlines like Thai Airways is bankrupt and will now survive on a Government injected monetary lifeline. The above grim scenario leaves the Unions and Associations with very little , I dare say zero elbow room to resort to their usual assertiveness in terms of ensuring continued respect of the worker Agreements or even safety related & other issues. Whenever, a worker feels insecure about his own employment (as is being experienced currently) she is generally not willing to follow the Unions directives and this fact is very well understood by any management, Air India being no exception.”

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Foucault points out, that the brutality of sovereign power in the West evolved into another form of technology of power, one that worked not by deductions but by production, body as a machine would be disciplined, its capabilities optimized, all its forces to extracted leading to its usefulness and ultimately the production of a ‘docile body’. I was effected through the procedures of power that characterized the disciplines, administration of bodies and calculated management of mobile life (1990). This individualizing, anatomic power focused on the performance of the body to invest in it life a positive influence, “endeavors to administer,

optimize, and multiply it.". It is exercised by normalizing biological, psychological and social technologies.

In the discursive sites of cabin and cockpit crew of this study, I found that though this 'disciplinary bio power became the dominant mode to advance the march of Neo-liberalism, from a socialist public employer to a competitive capitalist one, the sovereign power works in tandem with it, both deployed in concerted conscious mode to devastating and deep effect. In this it diverges from the western model where "sovereign power" has given way to "discipline power".

The Foucault concept of disciplinary power is the calculated manipulation of the bodies' elements, its gestures and its behaviour, a rearranging so that one may have control over others bodies, to do, operate as one wishes, with techniques, speed and efficiency - producing subjected and practiced bodies, docile bodies' (1995) .Discipline 'makes' individuals. By applying it to everyday life, this making is at the level of subjectivities, where the individual is marked by her ideology and these norms then create her identity which she adopts as her own and the others also see it as such. These norms create self-knowledge as well, thus privileging this new knowledge over any other. Thus, the subject is now internalizing and performing its discursive articulations which now constitute her. "Discipline is the political anatomy of detail-micro-physics of power, small acts of cunning endowed with a great power of diffusion (Foucault,p. 139, 1995)". It begins by distribution of individuals in space to supervise, to prevent collusion, (Foucault, p. 143, 1995) by creating enclosures, partitioning by analysing

spaces, by creating a useful space through division of labour process and individual labour , and by creating hierarchies within these spaces.

The spatiality, temporality and materiality is manipulated and the aircraft which is the workspace of mobile workers, becomes the prison or the asylum where these discursive practices unfold. The aircraft is an enclosure which once it begins operations, cannot be disturbed, This ‘pressurized can’ ensures that nothing from the outside comes in, thus the full focus of the mobile worker is on the aircraft and on the passenger with designated spaces for food, luggage, cabin and cockpit and rest areas, each with its own function. The *cabal* is prevented from operating as the mobile worker would always be in public view, the passenger takes the role of the supervisor here. By creating gendered workplaces, the galley for the male cabin crew and the cabin for the female, with the general declaration (GD) a document which lists the hierarchies on board, with the captain being the highest, the male cabin crew next and the female cabin crew at the bottom. By ‘dividing, comparing and differentiating’ these hierarchies are created with internalized *professional subjectivity* normalizing this control. The male crew internalize it fully by restricting themselves to the galley at all times, the only time they venture out is to supervise the rest. Thus accepting their position which has now excluded them from their role as a host and confined it to the kitchen/galley as the provider. He acts as a control on what the female cabin crew can take out of the galley and serve. Within the male crew also is hierarchy, further dividing them.

The cockpit crew hierarchy is based on the tenure and status of flying. The Commander is the designated head of the aircraft, this narrative reinforced within aviation through international norms of the profession such as the Article 10 of the Tokyo Convention.

“The aircraft is a dynamic platform moving in the 3D environment, cannot stop in the middle of its flight and therefore not only are we defying the principles of physics, we are defying the very luxury enjoyed by other professions wherein they can stop and seek help. We cannot.” (p. 57)

Aero-mobile personnel in the flying crew and cabin crew categories have seen their lives transition from a *techno-social contract* which helped them work with pride and commitment in managing difficult issues related to spatiality, temporality and corporeality given the nature of their nomadic identities to a *techno-managerial hegemony* in the name of efficiency, productivity and profitability. This has changed the very nature of their functioning with major negative impact on their professional standing. The demands on their roles and responsibilities have increased manifold due to technological advances as well as organizational-managerial stridency articulated in terms of increased workload, reduced remuneration, heightened job insecurity, compromises on personnel safety standards and militant actions to snuff out collective-representative voice mechanisms. Sustained assault on the dignity and respect of aero-mobile personnel has only resulted in the broken subjectivities of individualized and localized resistance which on the one hand is acknowledged as behaviour unbecoming of a “professional” but is justified as behaviour which is brought on by the actions of recalcitrant regimes of despotic managerialism.

The hegemonic diktats of an absentee management are issued safely ensconced on terra firma even as they churn out more and more stringent measures on the profit-centric premise of more-for-less and an aero-mobile laboratory run on the basis of insecurity and uncertainty. The flying passengers seem to be in a coalition with the airline managements to demand to be "served" ever more stridently ever ready to abuse and threaten with complaints creating a thankless environment for the crew. The crew fume and fret, groan and complain to each other but all that is behind a smiling face, courteous manners, instant responsiveness – behind a veil of civility and equanimity. They fulfil responsibilities because of an ingrained sense of dutifulness and the desire to excel in their own estimation. The irony is that all this the crew does with a double disadvantage – their desire to excel ultimately benefits the very agents who exploit them – managements and customers in a coalition of ruthless extraction of benefits. The other disadvantage is that they do this with depleting benefits. The *Subversive Hospitality* is a deep sense of marginalized grief and the angst of non-existence in the eyes of management and customers even as they deliver safety and service – with a smile.

The key insight which emerges from the narratives of women crew members and their experiences in the mobile work context is that the whole airline organizational-managerial discourse revolves around what has been termed time and again as the "male gaze". The reality of the "male gaze" defines the relationship between the female body and the constructions of power in airline organizations in turning the "male gaze" centric undercurrent into defining the roles and responsibilities of women crew members, the 'Woman' so 'constructed' (Mohanty

1988). Drawing from the Foucauldian feminist theorists (Acker 1990, Pullen 2017, Merilainin et.at 2015) as well as Judith Butler(1990,1993), I theorise that the gendering of the mobile worker occurs through repeated acts and gestures which then are normalized as the ideal form which reinforces the dominant social order. Socialization processes in the larger society, human resource policies and practices related to role descriptions and selection criteria, organizational induction processes at the point of entry into organizations (Trethewey 1999) tend to inculcate and reinforce a "male gaze" centric dynamic. The willing resetting of ones front teeth before finding acceptability as the female cabin member or the rejecting of the grey hair of a fellow female crew are not uncommon occurrences. Traditionally Indian 'Women' have also tended to internalize these body-centric power relations till the very "otherness" which constitutes the "male gaze" begins to get sensitized to the inequities relative to men cabin crew which prevail in organizations in relations to the terms and conditions of work like the age of retirement, questions of marriage and family, motherhood and child care roles. The disciplining of the Indian mobile crew cannot be thus, understood only through the gendered lens, the post-colonial context along with class intersects and creates the differences in their experiences, 'common world for all women' is a theoretically and politically ethnocentric and imperialist (Mohanty 1988) and intersectionality provides a novel lens (Davis 2008)

A youthful, slim body is a fit body which can withstand the vagaries of mobile work. A work which requires fitness of body and mind as it deals with pressurized cabins, high altitude flying, different time zones. In this work, any distractions such as family responsibilities especially motherhood role, creates a weakness which harms the mobile work as well as family. This

discourse reinforced through compulsory grounding of women cabin crew or removal of them from the cabin gave legitimacy to the *medicanization* of the mobile workers body (Foucault 1978). It is subjected to annual medical examinations, regular even 'spot' body-mass-index (BMI) linked weight-checks, appearance checks on flights by 'Check AirHostesses' and Inflight Supervisors, even by the commander of the flight.

The judgements of the courts reinforce this view '*They have to deal with passengers of various temperaments, and a young and attractive air hostess is able to cope with difficult or awkward situations more competently and more easily than an older person with less personal prepossessions' (*Air India Management submission , Khosla Award 1965) The female mobile workers body is scrutinized and regulated as an object owned by the airline, it as if she is not present in the discussion at all, the narrative is given legitimacy by the legal authorities as this is 'discrimination with reason' The reason being the welfare of the woman herself and her family, so she can discharge her 'marital responsibilities' (*Y.Merchant vs AICCA & Others* 2003). By pitting the male cabin crew against the female, creating a narrative of 'legacy rights' the female body is categorized as old, unattractive and unworthy.

The effects of the sovereign power were evidenced in the grounding of the female mobile crew when they breached the grace of excess weight concessions, given by the 'benevolent employer' (*Sangita Garg vs Indian Airlines 2014)* and the normalizing effect of the disciplinary power in the struggle of the mobile crew to adapt their bodies to the 'fit body' which is the ideal body of the mobile worker. The customer acts as a source of disciplinary power either directly or through the expectations articulated by the airline management, the regulatory bodies ,courts and news media. They act as an agent of surveillance, their constant gaze records even the minor transgressions and directs the repeated acts and gestures of the cabin crew who internalize it. This *heterosexual matrix* (Butler 1990) seeks the

performance of these disciplinary acts differently for men and women. Repeated over time, in the mobile workplace of aircrafts, airports and even layover hotels, it cements the proper , ideal conduct of the mobile worker. The bodies which are 'fat' are denied recognition in the embodied identity of the mobile worker. It is in striving for recognition that the mobile workers punish themselves, going for drastic diets, exercises and even procedures, to reach for the acceptance. If unsuccessful, they are ignored from the narrative of the mobile worker, this abjection (Butler 1993, Fotaki 2013) , pushing to the shadows, towards the background also reinforces the 'appropriate' body which is in the focus.

This trivialization of women's perspectives, their natural bodily changes, pregnancy and menopause, parenting related issues, the effect of reduced rest periods and their struggle against discrimination paints them as dissenters who are subjected to the practices of exclusion (Butler 1993). They are the 'shameful' class who are to be subjected to repeated acts of discipline.-

Collectivize, Resist, Appropriate:

The concerted assault of techno-managerial strategies of the airline is on the spatiality, temporality and corporeality dimensions of mobile working. The impact on the crew takes various forms – anger, frustration, lowered motivation and morale, alienation, a sense of powerlessness, meaninglessness and an acute sense of insecurity and ambiguity. Given the complexity of the task before the flying crew members and the worker unfriendly approach of management, the result is an atmosphere of simmering volatility.

While the vestiges of trade unions still remain as a shadow of its former self, resistance has passed over to more non-formal and localized modes to counter the negative consequences of spatiality, temporality as well as erosion of voice. In the new world of unrelenting

insensitivities and uncertainties, nomadic identities find innovative ways through localized rediscovery of *nomadic solidarities* as they seek to reimagine the spatiality and temporality which is intrinsic to their lives in the air and on the ground. Resistance takes the form of non-formal subversion of roles and responsibilities within the space available for protest by complying with the rules and procedures but even as rules are implemented while simultaneously devising creative protests using "smart" tactics – the concerted action, outside the ambit of the union, of simultaneously reporting sick which is permissible under the rules but with devastating consequences for operations – just to get the management to the negotiating table is an example. The "invisible" and the "latent" male gaze undercurrent when seen in terms of gendered inequities in the "visible" and "manifest" terms and conditions relative to men cabin crew, the iniquitous policies and practices trigger not only the impetus to put up a struggle against those inequities within the organization but also to revolt against the objectification of the female body even in the larger society. A few members of the women cabin crew category have not only launched a campaign to dismantle gendered inequities within the airline primarily through legal action but also to show up the masculine perspective which keeps them embodied. The participants bared their soul as they found reprieve in the conversations which bring out their helplessness. The conversations revolved around the cornering of the individuals who foolishly rammed against the management norms, the everyday ruthlessness which shattered their homes and health and the unknowing oppression which they realised only as they spoke. But it also brought to fore the sporadic rejections of the expectations, the dis-identifications from the imagery, the steeliness of resolve to bear the long legal battles without breaking and the enjoyment of the surreptitious mingling. In the global

village of fast paced life only matched by the speed of travel across geographies and time zones, the elitist life of the nomadic mobile worker is devastatingly isolating. Fragmented solidarity needs the excitement of meetings, the exchange of pain and discomfort, the company in misery to galvanise it into action (Canetti 1960). But the organization by closing the union offices, by taking away the self-assigning of flights with similar others or comrades robs the mobile worker of in-person and inter-personal solidarity in the collectivised form. With every flight is a new crew, not seen earlier and maybe never again. The passengers are strangers who become a familiar sight for a few hours but as the doors open, so does the short lived camaraderie which was built over a long flight.

The nomadic existence creates schisms within families, with a crew member for example lamenting the breakdown of her marriage. But it is her guilt on not performing the role of a mother which brings solidarity with similar others (Roy 1954), who live similar lives, laden with guilt but still craving the respite from domestic duties combined with financial freedom. Guilt is not only of the mother, it is of the caregiver as well, as the bilateral agreements between the union and the management are no longer the sanctity they had in earlier times. The nomadic life also brings health issues, which get aggravated with the depletion of the rest time and even the little time spent at home is joyless with mood swings, irritable behaviour induced by lack of restful sleep, loss of control over her own time has affected family life and with that her approach towards her work. She does not internalise the guilt instead blames the employer for her troubles. Broken subjectivities are intrinsic to nomadic identities in the face of managerial despotism. But the very brokenness galvanised, she refuses to accept the unpredictability,

forming an alliance with similar others, performing the role of the initiator, she creates a new age WhatsApp collective, which not only offers emotional support and solidarity, it functions as a pressure group, meeting an influential politician to advocate their grievances for the sake of the families. The attempts at non-formal collectivization are not always smooth, the fragile collective comes under enormous strain.

Post-structuralist resistance may provide a sense of personal valence, but it disintegrates in the face of the onslaught of organisational spite and venom. The organization uses all forms of enforcement tactics mostly unfair and terrorises the employee into submission as the episodic evidence clearly shows. The ones who did not succumb are ostracised as trouble makers, who no one within the organization supports and whose family has to bear the loss of income for four years. The participants talk of the union here, how its presence would have altered the balance. The solidarity glue provided by trade unions with their organizational and financial support capable of making for a formidable foe has reduced.

The aircraft cockpit is another arena of managerial disciplining discourse, with its narrative of man-machine, both working within their prescribed roles to make the complex mechanics of flight a reality. Cockpit surveillance is all pervading, with different machines recording every movement of man and machine. Even the spoken word is recorded for 'flight safety' enhancements and after the 9/11 terror attack; the pilot has to barricade herself within this small space for long hours. The pilots body rebels but is controlled through the six monthly medical examinations which only a perfect body clears. It wants to sleep in the long lull between take-off and landing, but it has to stay alert (P55). Even with the all-pervading surveillance, the

pilots appropriate the space of the cockpit and make it their own. They sing, talk incessantly, if only to stay awake, read (P 38), listen to All India Radio on Short wave but it takes only a few seconds for the role to take the controls back, as the stories of aircraft descending uncontrollable within seconds just before it was controlled, are recalled much like the Grimms children's tales to create a fear of the unknown which may happen to you, should you stray off the path. The professional pride binds the pilot to her seat for hours as if an inmate, for she has so much to lose if an incident takes place. Routine resistance to this disciplines take place with the cockpit being used as a place to roll up a mattress and sleep. But after 9/11, the cockpit door acts as a reminder of their places in the aircraft, for one discursive site it is towards the machine, for the other towards the passengers

The cockpit was also the space to smoke, when all smoking is banned in flights. It is like the corner adda, where aimless youth come together to chat or do girl watching (Quinn 2002), with it's masculinised space and terminology.. The organization has perpetuated this though a discourse of equality, thus it is the onus of the female pilot to accept the environment as it is and adapt herself to it. It is striking that all the male pilots interviewed stressed that they don't differentiate on basis of gender and all the female pilots interviewed were aware of the gender based distinction, some vocally articulating that a species called a woman is not welcome in the cockpit, others making their skins thick and their hearing selective. The women pilots have their own set of resistances performed here, where their mere presence acts as a censure. She populates it with feminine conversations, about nails, hair and children but at the same time accepts the masculinity by refusing to have a separate, more comfortable uniform or more

accommodating schedules in order to to be accepted as the professional. The woman pilot's body during maternity is not designated as a 'fit body' and thus cannot be allowed in. It leads to loss of income and in the long run, loss of progression. She does not protest it overtly, but resists it by taking the decision of not having children thus taking the control of her life back. When she does have children, she prides herself on not asking for any special treatment to take care of her children, even when the father is absent, preferring to have them cared for by neighbours rather than ask for accommodation. This broken subjectivity supports the organizations norms of a humanoid mobile worker. Always in prime condition, never shirking work and wearing professionalism like a badge of bravery.

The role is also enacted to resist the subjectivities, the Pilots use their discretional space of decision making to flag the discourse of safety over efficiency when they delay flights on account of MEL, take excess fuel or even refuse flights on account of inadequate rest. This action of ' reporting sick' is taken concertedly resulting in loss to the company.

The cabin crew reject the discourse of the pliable crew, and sometimes refuse drinks at other times, even discipline the passenger by force. The appearance which is controlled by the organization is treated with apathy to resist, 'like a homeless granny ' look is adopted with the uniform which is shapeless and unbecoming as a protest against the withholding of uniform allowances (Sine et al 2019) . These routine acts of resistance do little to affect the organization or the passenger and often leave the crew unhappy.

The protests of the mobile worker are set aside as being insignificant and as their protests are also routine and every day, the organization ignores them. But when the disciplining discourses perpetuate discrimination through the employment policies, the workers get a bull's eye to

target. This also focuses their single minded attention towards the attaining of their goal, however long it takes. When the female cabin crew job and income security were sacrificed at the altar of the male gaze and patriarchal employment rules, taking away their right to the job and to flying duties at 35, leaving them to fend for themselves, they protested long and hard. Insecurities and the discrimination based on bodily dimensions and appearances became the subject matter of resistance and struggle for change. The blatantly sexist observations of the tribunal, the politicians and the bureaucrats, ‘ we want Ms India not Mother India’ or that women are needed in the house, incensed them to fight a long and arduous legal journey. Their sense of self-worth was crushed by the successive discriminatory policies which humiliated women crew members. The concessions that they could get for themselves were due to the militant stance and unshakable solidarity displayed by their collective. The other discriminatory policy of enforcing unrealistic BMI based weight policies have targeted women with many of them left hanging under NTS for months on end with no income. In the guise of efficient, healthy and well turned out crew, women either above a certain age or returning after maternity were targeted. The female cabin crew have fought the legal battle making it a rallying point for solidarity. Creating their own informal groups, they used backroom channels to reach the highest offices and have succeeded in getting presidential orders which negates the judicial orders.

The little acts of resistance, the refusing to alter the uniforms thus rejecting the attractive cabin crew narrative, taking tactical stands where the operations can be hit most, following the SOP even when it leads to inefficiency, writing emails to regulatory bodies thus being a nuisance, refusing to colour their hair or reduce weight or alter their appearance, appropriation of cockpit

for personal leisure use, appropriating the cabin and galley space for sleeping, gossiping, loudly complaining, refusing entry to passengers to it, not reporting other crew for non- adherence to rules, adhering to bilateral even without union presence, resisting the teamwork narrative of a merged airline, refusing to man-up in cockpit and creating feminine spaces and rejecting the hosting with a smile expectation, and performing these repeatedly, thus subverting the normalizing discourses by refusing to become the 'docile body'. The resistance is performed in synchronized manner, all directed towards undermining and repeatedly chipping away of the identities that discipline them as mobile workers.

6.3 Conclusion

Did the critical discourse that addresses itself to repression come to act as a roadblock to a power mechanism that had operated unchallenged up to that point, or is it not in fact part of the same historical network as the thing it denounces (and doubtless misrepresents) by calling it 'repression'?

(Foucault, 1978, p. 10)

The post-structural frames have thrown up a profile of crew members as characterized by nomadic identities and solidarities, broken subjectivities, subversive hospitality and tactical resistance, insecure volatility and sacrificial legal figure and the resistance to bodily discrimination. Performative resistance is tactical, spontaneous at the point of engagement with

the many little skirmishes at the individual level. With the absence of Union leadership, there is no strategizing the actions of disruptions and thus as the Post-structural theoretical lens points to the control and resistance in co constitutive, fluid and multidimensional forms it is employed here. Discursively the mobile workers resist normalisation by creating a resistant subject. The sense of self of the mobile worker, pilot or cabin crew, male or female is created not only by the disciplining discourses which they prescribe to, but also the ones they distance themselves from. Goffman(1961) gives agency to the worker when he speaks of the stance taking by the worker, at one time towards the ascribed roles, at others resisting them.

The discussion has reflected that the mobile worker displays the stance taking and creates alternate meanings and identities for herself. But she also subverts to the crushing managerial discourses and aids them when she adopts a routine resistance which goes unnoticed by the organization. Is it really resistance then?

7 Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the literature review, methods, and theoretical articulation of mobile workers collectivization and resistance based on the lived experiences of the mobile worker and the crafting of different expressions of mobile resistance. Next, the contributions to theory and practice are outlined. Finally the limits of this thesis and directions for future research are pointed out.

7.2 Summarizing the Study

Understanding the context of the mobile work shapes the direction of the exploration and provides us the historical and contemporary perspectives to situate the mobilities of the worker. Indian Aviation has been an elitist arena where the contest for its control has led initially to the consolidations of the enterprises under the government and now with the discourse of New Public Management, the process of divestment of these towards private entities is ongoing, thus replaying the cycle of its birth and rebirth. The march of globalization fueled mobility of people and goods and the air transportation is the mule which turned into an Arabian horse to enable the rider to ride with speed. The machines became more 'advanced' technologically and as a result faster, bigger and lighter as well. They crowed the skies and the ground infrastructures of Air Traffic Control and the airports as the demand rose from the general travelling public and businesses for faster modes of travel. Exponential rise in the number of airports in recent times is due to the increased flights from numerous Indian and foreign aviation companies. In the first quarter of this year itself they have they 2254950 aircrafts, 2902.29 lakh passengers and 3053 thousand tonnes of freight .The FDI inflow in India's air transport sector (including air freight) reached US$ 2.75 billion before the impact of Covid-19 on the economy.

The collectivization of mobile workers has felt the brunt of these advancements. They had organized themselves under craft-based trade unions, supported by political and professional organizations who had offered them security of income and employment and through affiliation with their organizations. The mobile worker voiced their concerns and struck work to demand justice in regular intervals. With the general decline in trade unions strength due to the

commodification of aviation which depicts unions as vestiges of the past and barriers to the march towards 'progress', worker representatives are being harassed, the workers representations are being ignored, and the workers collective organizations are being terrorized into obscurity, all in the guise of 'efficiency', 'speed' and 'customer centricity'. The accelerated use of management ideas like restructuring, flexibility, downsizing and culture of customer centrality even in public enterprises, have increased the vulnerability of employees. This trend has intensified as the increase in mobility has not seen a commensurate increase in employees, leading to pressures of constant movement with little respite of a 'normal' life. The management ideas of specialization of work has advanced the attempt to divide the mobile workers solidarity through differentiations of gender, age, shape, employment status and vocations and the industrial relations environment has turned tumultuous and rancid. Within the aviation sector, 'terrorizing' of unions has intensified with legitimate airing of workers grievances being labelled as 'terrorism'. The legitimization of union subjugation is done by using de-recognition processes by regulators. Mobile workers have never been more insecure and therefore working under tremendous work intensification pressure but also the unproductive pressure of insecure mobile working, fluctuating incomes and uncertain tenures of employment. The profiling of the context of civil aviation shows that mobile work environments are blatantly unfriendly towards any form of collective or individual resistance. Being aware of the different ways in which a phenomenon has been approached in literature gives us the intellectual resources and vocabulary to engage in our own readings of social data, and craft theoretical positions that aid ongoing struggles of the oppressed. A review of literature suggests that trade unions have been the traditional mode of worker representation and have

been active in aviation amongst mobile workers. Worker collectives have traditionally been engaged by focussing mostly on organized labour and associated issues like strikes, collective bargaining and workers representation and resistance through trade unions. Their role as giving employee voice, protecting wages ignored their wider role in creating societal realities of solidarity through shared experiences and insecurities. The mobilization of class consciousness as a basis of solidarity could have fused the worker together to position her interests in the economic churning which would have negated her insecure working conditions and lifted the collective processes towards a larger social purpose. On the other hand it could have offered protection against the incessant managerial demands and pressures on income levels and work intensification. Comprehensively they seek to protect worker interests against the hegemony of the 'employer, state and its institutions'.

Collective action is under siege. The premise of 'collective voice' rests on pluralistic democratic principles with assumptions that both are based on democratic fairness and procedures of law. They are being marginalised by the employers attack on collective efforts and organizations of workers by reducing the facilities provided for unions and their leaders, withdrawing protection to union officers and in extreme cases even derecognising unions as well as by reduction in membership as a result of increased contingency labour, ineffective union leadership and lack of collective action.

Literature studying the Indian context have identified the marginalization of trade unions as well. The protection of labour rights through labour legislations and regulations has also shrunk and resulted in the creation of spaces where there is no applicability at all of this legal protection. The trade union movement has been intertwined with the nationalist movement with

its ‘welfare’ focus with divergent political ideologies leading to multiple strands of unions. Their influence has been sought to be squeezed through managerial, executive and even legislative actions. The business organizations are increasingly ‘psychologizing’ industrial relations with individualization of this relationship and increasing the distance with employees through increased contracting thus pushing work towards the informal economy and its informal workers. This increased informalization has reduced safe spaces for workers to join unions without reprisals, and thus has reduced union membership. Even union leaders and members are increasingly penalized for ‘strike’ action which is deemed illegal. With both voice and hands of the unions tied, workers are left orphaned - but not without agency.

Related literature points towards collectivization as a process, through the theoretical lens of social psychology, labour process and post-structuralist lenses. Social Psychology suggests that collective identities are products of and are produced by interactive and sociocultural structures. Individuals are drawn to others like themselves, in part because attraction toward similar others is self-gratifying, and because communication with similar others is often easier, as is the development of trust. For the labour process theorist, contradiction and conflict are a fundamental composite of the employment condition. The political intent of liberalism is to eliminate the possibility of conflict as a state of the worker, and replace it with an acceptance of inequalities and subjugations, in return for guarantees of minimalist autonomy and adequate material sustenance. The worker class is defined by consciousness brought about by a set of common experiences felt and the articulation of their interests between themselves and also against the others who oppress them. They come together to ‘breach’ the disciplining forces which demand quiet acceptance of the labour process. The process of coming together is

actively acted by the worker through their speeches, leadership, writings and actions. The burden carried by the worker is thrown out with the solidarity and the excitement this coming together brings. The post-structuralist approach focuses on the performativity of the collective - the performance of the coming together, spontaneous and emergent. Once given direction, this group comes together, momentarily as if forgetting its individual differences, to 'discharge' and act towards the fulfilment of the unattained goal. The relations of the heterogenous, the seemingly different in conversations, texts, approaches, and also the material body can be an individual and at the same time networking to come together, in a stable form. The two dichotomies, of the individual and the collective can co-exist without annihilating the other.

It is further ascertained from literature that the theorising of power and subjectivity influences the understanding of workers resistance to organizational discourse and thus resistance has been explored in myriad ways in organizational studies (Zembylas 2019). The different ways it has been explored is a reflection of the increasing constraints on the resisting avenues, partly due to the decline of workers collectives such as trade unions, whose own decline is linked to the increase in contingent work, reduction in manufacturing jobs, the narrative of global economy and its supportive government practices. The other challenge is the capturing of practices which resist and reify the management discourses simultaneously, caught in a 'deadly, mutual embrace'. The manner of resisting has moved from more overt forms such as strike action to covert behaviours such as humour, cynicism and whistleblowing. The routine, obscure resistance has even been seen as 'decaffeinated' which changes little, neither the organizational ways nor the workers subjected to them.

The organizational control was effected through surveillance, human resource practices, teamwork, culture which do not require proximity but can function from a separate place, thus leaving no place which is beyond the disciplining arm of the organization. This control which works on organisational disciplining discourses wanted normative employees. Resistance to these organizational discourses have been studied in the context of the shop floor and blue collared workers but increasingly also in the world of consultants, managers, hairdressers, baristas, police officers and others.

The industrial relations perspective studied trade unions and collective covert resistance in a conflictual relationship effected through strikes, tools down and picketing. The workers resisted managerial control over their work and wages. Worker collectives resisted through bilateral agreements and collective bargaining. The industrial relations discourse is subverting various aspects of managerialism, however still operating within the same frame of employment relationship. With the reduction of the space for unions and their actions, the space of worker resistance has shrunk thus this approach tends to neglect other forms of resistance, from actors beyond the workers and also not addressed the subjectivities of the worker. The labour process theorists focus on the structural antagonism in the employment relationship. Workers put up a resistance in order to evade control, reduce exploitation and wrestle back some autonomy. They work through unions if they are present or without them, and if there is no union, start organizing one. These acts are ‘fragmented’ or collective and focus with the focus on the act of resistance. These can also be directed towards other workers as well and individual resistance can give rise to collective and collabourative resistance. The labour process theorist looked at resistance beyond the union-management relations but rejected the

notion of subjectivity as espoused by the post-structuralists. This limitation along with its narrow focus on workers' acts of resistance ignores the other actors and forms which go beyond the traditional worker management dichotomy.

The post- structuralist lens looks at resistance at the level of subjectivities where the workers resist the normalising discourses by re-inscribing meanings. The disciplining techniques which are employed by organizations include spatial distribution of individuals and control of their activities. Thus, the post-structuralist position is that power is a much more material force than the economic-deterministic priorities of Marxist perspectives. This discipline produces practiced bodies, which are normalized to elicit conformity to the dominant organizational discourse. Performance can be driven towards subverting dominant discourses as the worker is not a docile body but an active participant in her subjectification which she resists but also accepts. The post-structuralist Foucauldian lens sees resistance and subjectification of the worker as an ambiguous interplay where individuals exploit the looseness around meanings in a constant and simultaneous process of resistance, reproduction and re-inscription. Through this lens is able to see the routine, mundane resistance both individual or concerted, and studies the phenomena at the level of subjectivities. It has been critiqued as not making any real difference to the workers or the employers as these acts are hardly visible or difficult to see. They end up being, as is often noticed with surprise, the support of the very order that such actions transgress. However, the Zizekian lens suggests that there is nothing inadvertent or spontaneous in the occurrence of resistance. The worker is conscious of her choices and decides consciously to resist. Resistance is then an act of identity creation, an act of enjoyment which may have risks, unlike the 'decaf' resistance of post structuralism and reframes the relations of

subordination. Through the human geography lens, resistance is seen in the power relations involved in the production of space. These assume that there are no places outside of power relations to resist/oppose the injustices of oppression. The resistance is for socio-spatial reconfiguration and transforming of spaces to appropriate the meaningfulness of places. This is done by occupying, transgressing and re-inscribing places. Variously influenced by Lefebvre conception of space, adopting both post-structuralist and Marxian approaches towards space, it sees space not as 'background scenery' but the constitutive element in the workers struggle to transform meaning.

The context of aviation creates a workplace which is mobile, enclosed and suspended in the air above the ground. To understand collectivization and resistance of the mobile worker, literature is vibrant and interdisciplinary. Earlier studies focused on the materiality of mobility and space through the lens of architecture. Numerous studies including recent ones have explored the new mobile work mostly through the lens of information and communications technology. As the mobile worker transverse not only distance, space but also time, it is explored through spatiality, mobility and temporality. The interactions of space, movement and power are explored thought the meaning and appropriation of spaces in organisations. Studies of telework, nomadic movements through global villages intertwined with work-home boundaries as well as detachedness have been done. Mobility while working, mobility for work and mobility as work guided this understanding but mostly focused on technology and ICT. There were notable exceptions such as understanding hairdressers who were mobile for work and domiciliary work where 'body work' requires mobility not necessarily influenced by ICT. Lefebvre's work viewed through overlapping aspects- spatial practice, representational space

and representation of space (Dale 2005) has guided human geographical research. Social conceptions of space were studied through socio-spatial theorists, through radical Marxist traditions, critical labour process and cultural theories to arrive an understanding of the workspace as materialization of power relation. . These sites of control create new negotiations of boundaries of work and non-work. The spatial positioning of the workspaces too acts like a Panopticon, where the gaze is always on the worker. Seen through the interpretations and experiences of the worker and her use of space, using mostly an interpretive lens, studies have focused on the stories that space tells.

Foucault connects this spatial power to the human body and its individual subjectivities as *bio-politics*. This embodied power leads to the production of self through the process of self-discipline and normalization, which is the construction of an idealised form of conduct. Thus, though mobile work is explored through mobility studies and space though spatiality, the direct representations and experiences of movement remain less, with notable exceptions such as that of studying travel space from passenger perspectives. There have been no studies which have engaged with the experiences of the mobile worker as she reconstitutes the workplace in the embodied movement of work through time, proximity and distance.

This engagement with literature on the context of aviation, industrial relations, collectivization, resistance and mobile work offered insights to the complexities of the mobile workers workspace as well as the depleting avenues for resistance as well as areas of exploration of spatiality and mobility which influence work and workplace relations. The space embodies power relations within which the possibility of resistance happens. Space has been approached objectively as though it is the materiality of its planning and its effects through the lived

experiences of individuals and their subjective interpretations which the post-structuralist lens privileges. Thus the lived experiences of mobile workers form the basis of theoretical articulations in this research.

Qualitative research is interpretive and thus guided by the researcher's beliefs and understandings of the world. This research privileges post-structuralist lens for accessing data on performance of collectivization in mobile work and the organizational discourses that discipline the employees and are resisted by them. In industrial relations studies it is difficult to specify precise, logical bases for most of the interesting relationships. Thus this has led researchers to approach industrial relations from a social science framework. The research objectives and questions explored an engagement at the level of subjectivities to understand the lived experiences of the mobile worker as organizational discourses discipline her subjectivities. As the purpose of the research was to 'accumulate sufficient knowledge to lead to understanding', the larger issues of power and equality are explored alongside employee subjectivities. Workers are attached to diverse and heterogenous bases of identifications as they resist imposition of control through dis-identification and discursive means of creating a resistant subject position. Her concern to defend her valued conception of self would be co-constitutive, multi-dimensional and fluid thus an interpretive paradigm guiding this qualitative research was post structural that takes a non-essentialist view, recognizing the possibility of multiple identities and the possibility of changing identities within different contexts. This perspective considers the social construction of identity and subjectivity to be influenced by social-organizational realities. It addresses the 'missing subject' in labour process perspectives where the workers lived experiences are not explored. It explores how consent is manufactured

thus leading to an alienated subject who has been suppressed through power. Alongside this is the decline in the trade union space which is encouraging organizations to target the 'subjectivities' of the employees. Poststructuralist research practices do not look to identifying participant responses that can be seen to give rise to essentialist or uniquely privileged accounts that discover "the truth" of a situation. Instead, emphasis is placed on identifying meanings that are context specific and that relate to the varying discursive practices operating. When considering views of the self, poststructuralist orientations rejects the idea of an essential or core self that remains the same in all situations. In contrast, emphasis is placed on decentred subjects, where subjectivity is regarded as changing, complex, and contradictory entity.

The researcher thus embarked to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon from the perspective of the participant. The fieldwork consisted of unstructured interviews with participants across two discursive sites, operating cockpit and cabin crew, along with observations at their work sites with data collection and data analysis as simultaneous and ongoing activities. As the aim was to approach participants from whom one could substantially learn, purposive sampling was employed. As an ex-operating crew, many mobile workers were approached, the research objective elaborated and based on their availability and comfort unstructured interviews were conducted. The representative voices of the participants such as union officials and vocal workers were interviewed and they directed the researcher to other key participants, thus subsequently snowball sampling was employed. The fifty eight participants include the researcher who is an ex- union official and operating cabin crew herself. Thus, though care was taken to ensure representation from the population and such diversity in age, gender, experience and job roles - both executive (Managerial) and non-

managerial (Workman) categories - was attempted, the foremost underlying objective was the use of theoretical sampling to interview participants who could add given the richness of their lived experiences. As data saturation occurred, and no additional data was emerging, reaching out to new participants was ceased.

In the interviews, the researcher began with casual conversations, with the respondents often asking about her as well. As most of the respondents were known to the researcher as ex-colleagues or acquaintances she interacted with during her earlier stint in the trade union, the setting was informal. The participants spoke freely but declined recording of the interviews in many instances, fearing adverse action by the employer. Though unstructured interviews were the main source of data, reports, document, court judgements and participant observations supplemented them. Interviews were conducted at the participants agreed location. It allowed the researcher to "probe and expand" the interviewee's responses guided by the research questions of the study. The interviews did not always follow a linear storied progression and the participants shared experiences which may be linked to questions which had to come at a later stage of the interview. The data was then collected in field notes and reflections of the researcher. It was later transcribed into memos which included the researcher's reflexive engagement with the data.

The various approaches to qualitative inquiry, namely narrative approach, grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography and case studies were studied. In this study, the narrative approach thorough a post-structuralist lens guided the data analysis. Using a narrative approach, the analysis approached the interview data using paradigm thinking to create descriptions of themes that hold across the narratives. Data analysis was an ongoing process

alongside the interviews as each engagement with data increased the understanding and informed the subsequent interviews. The data was read and reread multiple times with reflexive methodology aided with systematic reflection, careful interpretation. The analysis in form of reflective memos started soon after the interviews were conducted, it stretched as the transcribed interviews were read and re-read and when theory was revisited. Through these narratives the analysis was conducted with an aim to critically engage with the social relationships and practices. Themes, the core of the notion the research is attempting to understand, can be recovered through varied ways. The texts were read and re-read holistically along with the memos and notes, to make sense of the experience of the respondents at the discursive sites. Subsequently once the broad themes were understood, significant parts of the texts which supplied the theme were re-read and captured. Triangulation was achieved by multiple indicators with multiple data sources, multiple methods of access such as substantiating interview data with documents. Though it was primarily the researcher who studied the site, an attempt was made to gain 'thick descriptions'. The researcher tried to grapple with inconsistent findings and sought to reflect on them.

Ethical considerations dictated data collection and analysis. The study objectives were disclosed at the outset and as it explored organizational discourses, subjectivities and resistance, the job safety of the participants was guarded. The names have been withheld to protect their identities and on their request no audio even if recorded is shared. A few of the participants, in the course of the free flowing conversations, shared personal and delicate experiences and mentioned the names of co-workers or others. The same were not included

into the transcripts though it did bring the researcher closer to the lived experiences of the participants.

7.3 Implications For Theory

The study contributes by developing a theorization of the collectivization of performances that are hostile. It is done through the implicit narratives of mobile workers' micro-resistance, which contest the disciplining of their subjectivities. It also provides that the increased essential aspect of mobility in the globalized world and the intensified velocity of travel is an exploitative experience for the mobile workers. It has an adverse impact on their physical- mental health, their relationships, and their working conditions, and it is compounded with the absence of workers' unions.

It contributes to theory by highlighting the mechanisms of Foucault's (1990,1995) theorization of the juridical power mechanisms of deduction that symbolized sovereign power where it seized the bodies of mobile workers and controlled their time, in effect took over their life and then disposed of them or suppressed it as it willed in its role as the superior being. It also highlights the mechanisms of the discipline power through the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life, sieving the mobile workers on their value and utility, normalizing a robotic, fleshless, youthful body that operates without constraints of time.

It further highlights the inadequacies of the micro-resistance in making substantial changes to the mobile worker's lives or the mobile work. Micro-resistance provides the worker an alternate

creation of resistant subject positions and meanings to her identities but does not 'chip away at the managerial discourse. Doing so shows that subject positions explored through his methodological approach of focus on detailed everyday acts of power works towards creating fissures where the mobile worker subverts and inscribes new meaning to the subject positions so created such as the host and the aviator. The nomadic identities and solidarities, broken subjectivities, subversive hospitality, tactical resistance, insecure volatility, sacrificial legal figure, and resistance to bodily discrimination are the performances of collectivization and resistance. These are conducted through performances of a host, which is enacted as hostile, extending Derrida's hospitality (2000), the potential for the hostility that underpins the idea of hospitality and the docile host.

It contributes to theory by highlighting that this lethal suppression that follows the resistance to these normalizations brings the might of the concerted mechanisms of judicious-institutional sovereign and normalizing discipline power on the mobile worker with crushing effect. This very concerted mechanism is thus diverging from the western experience of sovereign power supplanted by discipline power.

7.4 Implications For Practice

Its contribution to practice is that workers would not stay subjugated forever, and even normalized workers can disrupt organizational norms. Collectives are an outlet for worker sentiments and have a crucial role in channelizing their concerns in the forms of dialogue and

negotiations leading to industrial and societal peace. To resist organizations in the anti-worker environment of India, where it is ranked in the ten worst counties for workers (ANI 2020 July 20), collective action through workers collectives may stand a better chance at protecting workers than individual routine, everyday resistance.

It further highlights that collective mobilization has to notice the individualized and localized resistances and build the energy flowing from resistant subjects into the strategies and tactics of collective mobilization and action to make management who have eyes but cannot see and ears but cannot hear, pay heed. This contribution is directed towards workers' unions, who, for their survival, have to synchronize the little struggles and strategies with the goal of overt collective action.

Lastly, it highlights the heightened insecurity of the mobile worker and the conflicted subject positions she occupies. In the highly complex air travel environment with no room for error and its focus on safety and security, these contradictions can create opportunities for reactive actions from mobile workers with devastating effects and, thus, need to be addressed with sensitivity.

7.5 Limitations & Future Directions

This study has studied the mobile worker through the post-structuralist methodological lens, exploring and extracting her experiences of suppression and resistance. Though it has attempted to address the 'missing subject' of Labour Process theories, it has not addressed the structural effects on the experiences on the marginalized.

Future research should consider the experiences of those mobile workers whose identities and subjectivities are attributed to class, caste, and sexual orientation. Foucault (1980) argues that attention to things, people, and ideas excluded from the dominant discourses of resistance and to those subjugated knowledge written out of our history is an important entry point for critique. With the increased adoption of right-wing Hindu nationalism, the subdued discourses of Anglo-Indian and Parsi mobile workers, the LGBTQ workers who have traditionally gravitated towards Indian aviation, are threatened into obscurity. Future research should explore these narratives for power mechanics and resistance discourses.

The mobile work has long sexualized women and celebrated youth, but it has also emasculated the men who do cabin work, pushing them towards the complete acquisition and docility inflight. Though the study has reflected the gendered experience of the roles of aviator and the cabin crew, it has focused on women's experiences. Future studies can aid the understanding of men who do feminized work and how the organizations create these subject positions in the context of dominant patriarchal social structures.

The study pertains to the pre-Covid period, and the findings, therefore, reflect the situation pre-pandemic. The current scenario has had a severe impact on business and the decimation of the aviation industry. These difficulties have led to an intensification of mobile workers' insecurity with it. The three research questions explored in this study may be revisited to bring out the contradictions present as the organizations, and mobile workers readjust their articulatory practices of dominance and resistance.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter summarized the research exercise undertaken in this study in the form of literature review, articulation of methods and theoretical articulation. It discussed the contributions to theory and practice that this study makes. Finally, the chapter concluded by indicating the limits of this thesis and highlighting the need for explorations of more subjugated discourses of dominance, insecurity and resistance.

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Appendix A- Regulatory and Legislative Framework

Policy	Ministry of Civil Aviation

	Enters into International Agreements & Formulates National Policy
Legislation	Airport Authority Act, 1994 Governs Regulation of Airports Aircraft Act, 1934 & Aircraft Rules, 1937 Governs Regulation of Aircrafts Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India Act, 2008 Governs Tariffs & Disputes between Airport Service Providers Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against Safety of Civil Aviation Act, 1982 Defines Offences in Relation to Civil Aviation Anti Hijacking Act, 2016-Provides for Penalties against Hijacking Carriage by Air Act, 1972 Defines Liability of Airlines in Case of Damage or Injury Airport Authority of India (AAI)
Regulators	Regulates Construction and Management of Airports Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Regulates Safety & Operations of Aircrafts Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) Regulates airport and airline security standards Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) Regulates tariffs and fees Chicago Convention Facilitates Safe & Peaceful Development of Int'l Civil Aviation Provided upon request only

International Agreements	Chicago Convention Facilitates Safe & Peaceful Development of Int'l Civil Aviation Bilateral Agreements Defines Specific Aspects of Int'l Flights Between State Parties

Source: Nishith Desai Associates Indian Aviation Sector Report, August 2016

Appendix B: Joint Forum of Air India Unions/Guilds/Association

JOINT FORUM
OF AIR INDIA UNIONS/GUILDS/ASSOCIATIONS
AGAINST PRIVATIZATION

To,

Dated: 30th May 2018

The Chairman and Managing Director,
Air India Limited,
New Delhi 110001

Sub: **Tarnishing the Image of Air India – The National Flag Carrier and its Employees by Ex. ED Mr. Jitendra Bhargava**

Respected Sir;

This is to bring to your kind notice that time and again **Mr. Jitendra Bhargava Ex. ED is spreading negativity on print/electronic/social media** about our esteemed organisation and hard working employees tarnishing the image of our National Carrier at the time when the organisation is showing all round performance and improving on all parameters with the whole hearted efforts and hard work of employees.

The negativity created by him on various media platforms is deterring the customers of Air India thus giving direct benefit to the competitor airlines, affecting the revenues.

Moreover he avails AI passage facility to travel in Executive Class to attend media studios where he speaks against Air India and its employees, his view are extremely objectionable, undesirable and strongly condemned by us.

We the Joint Forum of all Air India Unions/Guilds/Associations/Trust demands to initiate criminal proceeding against him and withdraw the post retirement facilities availed by him like medical and passage with immediate effect.

s/d-

Air Corporations Employees Union (ACEU)

All India Service Engineers' Associations (AISEA)

Air India Employees Union (AIEU)

Aviation Industry Employee Guild (AIEG)

Air India Aircraft Engineers' Association (AIAEA) WB

All India Aircraft Engineers' Association (AIAEA) NB

Air India Engineers Association (AIEA)

United Air India Officers Association (UAIOA)

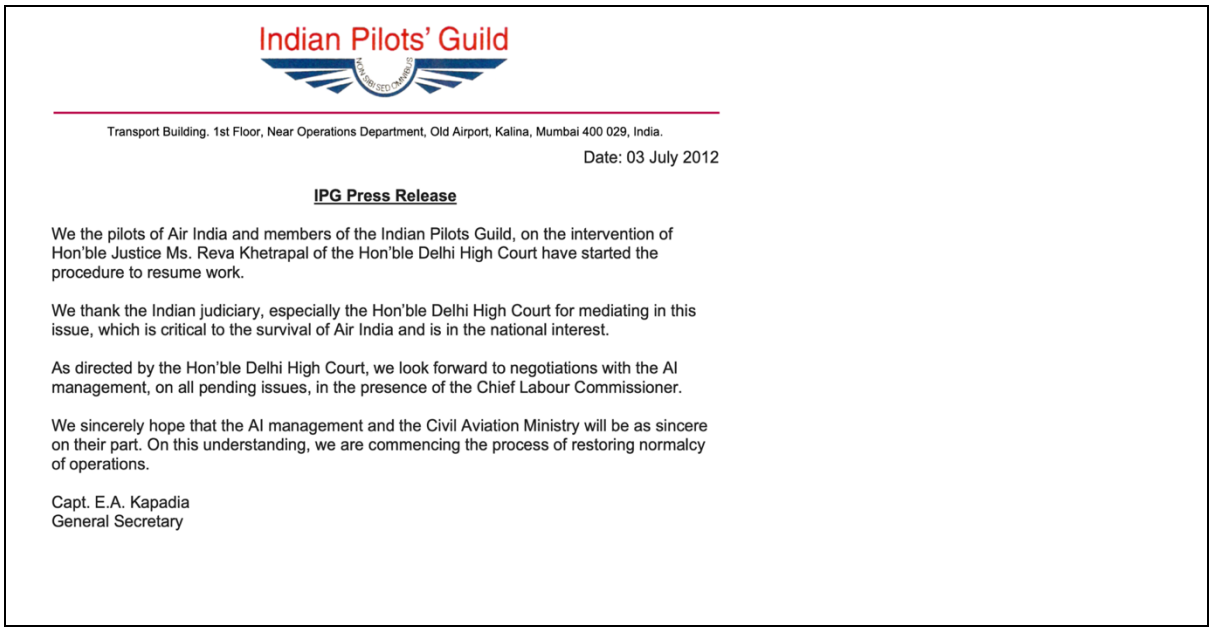
All India Cabin Crew Association (AICCA)

Bharatiya Kamgar Sena (BKS)

All India Airline Retired Personnel Association (AIARPA)

Air India Retired Employees Trust (AIRET)

Appendix C: IPG Press Release For Cession Of Strike



Indian Pilots' Guild

Transport Building. 1st Floor, Near Operations Department, Old Airport, Kalina, Mumbai 400 029, India.

Date: 03 July 2012

IPG Press Release

We the pilots of Air India and members of the Indian Pilots Guild, on the intervention of Hon'ble Justice Ms. Reva Khetrapal of the Hon'ble Delhi High Court have started the procedure to resume work.

We thank the Indian judiciary, especially the Hon'ble Delhi High Court for mediating in this issue, which is critical to the survival of Air India and is in the national interest.

As directed by the Hon'ble Delhi High Court, we look forward to negotiations with the AI management, on all pending issues, in the presence of the Chief Labour Commissioner.

We sincerely hope that the AI management and the Civil Aviation Ministry will be as sincere on their part. On this understanding, we are commencing the process of restoring normalcy of operations.

Capt. E.A. Kapadia
General Secretary

Appendix D: Press Release MOCA

Print Release

Press Information Bureau
Government of India
Ministry of Civil Aviation

03-July-2012 19:08 IST

Civil Aviation Minister Hopes that Strking Air India Pilots will Join Back, Says that High Court Direction Endorses Government Views

Minister of Civil Aviation Shri Ajit Singh has expressed hope that the striking Air India pilots will call off the strike immediately and those who are in service will join their duties within 48 hours as per the commitment made by them in the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi. He has also said the Government is always willing to consider the grievances of the pilots including reinstatement of the terminated pilots of Air India.

In a statement Shri Singh has said that the High Court direction on the strike has endorsed the views of the Government that the pilots should call off the strike unconditionally and report back to duty. The Minister said that the Government is committed to the welfare of the employees of Air India including pilots and at the same time revive Air India to the past glory to make it the best airlines.

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Appendix E: AICCA Bulletin Name Change And Representation Enlargement

AICCA/IB-2008/005

6TH March,2008

ALL INDIA CABIN CREW ASSOCIATION

Dear Friends,

The Air India Cabin Crew Association was formed 37 years ago to espouse the cause of the Cabin Crew of Air India, after breaking away from the then ACEU of which we were a part. In our initial years, like any fledgling organization we have had our ups and downs, however, during each one of these past 37 years we have fought for cabin crew issues with the Management of Air India and also the Government.

The AICCA has negotiated and signed numerous record notes, settlements and agreements ranging from wage settlements to working conditions and productivity linked agreements. We have during this period successfully lobbied and fought against contract cabin crew, Charter Airlines, disinvestment of Air India and many similar matters.

Today the cabin crew of Air India have amongst the best working conditions in the Airline Industry, and our affiliation to the Shiv Sena, through the Bhartiya Kamgar Sena has ensured that the voice of the Cabin Crew is heard through out the echelons of Government. As recently as 13th August 2008, thanks to the dynamic and forceful leadership of our President Shri.Kiran Pawaskar, we have reached an agreement on our wage negotiations after 10 years.

The AICCA has at its last 2 General Body meetings unanimously resolved to amend its constitution to expand its name from AIR INDIA CABIN CREW ASSOCIATION to the "ALL INDIA CABIN CREW ASSOCIATION" and has altered its objects clauses to "organize and unite persons engaged as Cabin Crew employed in India and abroad in the Air India corporation, Air India ltd, Indian Airlines corporation, Indian Airlines Ltd, National

Whilst we understand that there may be differences in our working systems, and job conditions, rest assured that when oppressed workers get together to fight devious managements, all barriers of difference break down.

Over the past 2 months our Assistant General Secretary Mrs.Seema Rawat has been meeting Crew of Indian airlines at various bases to apprise them of the possibilities of joining hands to create a merger of workmen cabin crew of Air India and Indian Airlines. We in AICCA take this opportunity to welcome all of you with open arms to fight the Management of our merged airlines together with us, so that together we can work for a better tomorrow for all Cabin Crew.

With warm regards,

For ALL INDIA CABIN CREW ASSOCIATION Contact Nos.

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Appendix F: Fieldwork Overview

	Variation	Documents	Purpose
Non-participant observations	On flights, at layovers and at airports	Photos, field notes	Observe practices as they unfold. Document the material and the social aspects. (Schwartzman, 1993)
Semi- structured interviews	1-2 h/interview, face to face, Several follow-up interviews face to face or on phone.	Tape-recording and transcriptions, field notes.	Construct narratives about the organization. Construct understanding for the context. Observe how certain constructions are enacted. (Czarniawska, 2004a)
Informal conversations	With several over social occasions and meetings at airports, coffee shops or homes	Notes.	Construct narratives about the organization. Construct understanding for the context. Observe how certain constructions are enacted. (Czarniawska, 2004a, Schwartzman, 1993)
Texts (including photos, posters etc) about the aviation organizations	Texts produced by the organization (e.g. advertising brochures)and texts produced by other actors (e.g.Trade Unions, DGCA, Judgements)	Digitally saved or paper copies.	Collects narratives about the organization. (Feldman et al. 2004)

*Formal Data Collection conducted during four Phases:

Phase	Month	Year
1	December	2014
2	May-December	2015
3	June- December	2016
4	November- February	2018-19

Appendix G: Participant Profile

Participant		Gender	Age	Work Group	Union status	Marital Status	Dependants	Interview Duration	Frequency
P	1	F	35-40	Cabin AH	Member	Married	Y	1.5 hours	1
P	2	F	40-45	Cabin-Purser	Member	Divorced	N	3 hours	3
P	3	M	45-50	Cockpit-Com	Office Bearer	Married	N	1.5 hours	2
P	4	M	50-55	Cabin-Purser	Member	Married	Y	45 mins	1
P	5	M	50-55	Cabin-Purser	Member	Married	Y	1 hour	2
P	6	F	40-45	Cabin AH	Member	Married	Y	1.5 hours	1
P	7	F	45-50	Cabin AH	Non-Member	Married	Y	1.5 hours	2
P	8	F	40-45	Cabin AH	Member	Married	N	2 hours	1
P	9	F	60-70	Cabin-Chief AH	Executive	Unmarried	N	1.5 hours	1
P	10	M	30-35	Cabin-Crew	Office Bearer	Divorced	N	2.5 hours	2
P	11	F	25-30	Cabin-Crew	Member	Unmarried	N	45 mins	1
P	12	M	35-40	Cockpit-F/O	Office Bearer	Married	Y	1.5 hours	2
P	13	M	30-35	Cabin-Crew	Office Bearer	Married	Y	2.5 hours	2
P	14	M	45-50	Cabin-Purser	Member	Married	Y	3 hours	3
P	15	F	40-45	Cabin AH	Member	Married	Y	1 hour	2
P	16	F	40-45	Cabin AH	Member	Married	N	30 mins	1
P	17	F	40-45	Cabin AH	member	Unmarried	N	45 mins	1
P	18	M	50-55	Cabin-Purser	office Bearer	Married	Y	45 mins	1
P	19	F	30-35	Cabin-Crew	Member	Divorced	N	45 mins	1
P	20	F	40-45	Cabin AH	Member	Divorced	N	2 hours	1
P	21	M	50-55	Cabin-Purser	Office Bearer	Married	Y	1.5 hours	2
P	22	M	45-50	Cabin-Purser	Member	Married	Y	2.5hours	2
P	22	M	45-50	Cabin-Purser	Member	Married	Y	2.5hours	2
P	23	F	40-45	Cabin AH	Member	Married	Y	1 hour	1
P	24	F	45-50	Cabin AH	member	Married	N	1 hour	1
P	25	M	40-45	Cockpit-Com	office Bearer	Married	Y	3.5 hours	4
P	26	M	35-40	Cabin-Purser	member	Married	Y	45 mins	1
P	27	M	45-50	Cabin-Purser	Non-Member	Unmarried	N	1 hour	1
P	28	M	45-50	Cabin-Purser	Non-Member	Married	Y	45 mins	1
P	29	F	25-30	Cabin-Crew	member	Unmarried	N	1.5 hours	1
P	30	M	45-50	Cabin-Purser	Member	Unmarried	N	45 mins	1
P	31	M	45-50	Cabin-Purser	Office Bearer	Married	N	2 hours	2
P	32	F	50-60	Cabin-Chief AH	Ex-Office Bearer/Executive	Married	Y	45 mins	2
P	33	M	30-35	Cabin-Crew	Member	Married	Y	30 mins	1
P	34	F	50-55	Sr Cabin Crew	Executive	Single	N	1.5 hours	1
P	35	M	60-65	Cabin-Purser	Office Bearer	Married	Y	2 hours	1
P	36	M	45-50	Cabin-Purser	Member	Divorced	Y	1.5 hours	1
P	37	F	48	Pilot	Executive	Married	Y	1.5 hours	1
P	38	F	35	Pilot	Member	Married	N	30 mins	1
P	39	F	53	Pilot	Executive	Divorced	y	2 hours	2
P	40	F	55	Pilot	Executive	Married	y	2 hours	1
P	41	M	35	Pilot	Member	Divorced	N	2 hours	2
P	42	F	40-45	Cabin AH	Member	Divorced	Y	1.5 hours	2
P	43	F	35-40	Cabin AH	Member	Married	y	1 hour	1
P	44	M	40-45	Cockpit-F/O	Office Bearer	Married	Y	30 mins	2
P	45	F	50-60	Cabin-Chief AH	Executive	Married	Y	45 mins	1
P	46	F	60-70	Cabin-Chief AH	Executive	Unmarried	N	1.5 hours	1
P	47	M	45-50	Cabin-Purser	Member	Married	Y	45 mins	1
P	48	M	55	Office Bearer	Office Bearer	Married	M	45 mins	1
P	49	F	53	Pilot	Executive	Married	Y	2.5 hours	3
P	50	F	47	Pilot	Executive	Married	Y	30 mins	1
P	51	M	46	Pilot	Executive/ Ex Office Bearer	Married	Y	1 hour	1
P	52	M	53	Pilot	Executive	Married	Y	2.5 hours	3
P	53	M	60	Office Bearer	Office Bearer	Married	M	1.5 hours	1
P	54	F	60-70	Cabin-Chief AH	Executive	Married	Y	3 hours	1
P	55	M	45-50	Cockpit Com	Executive	Married	Y	3 hours	4
P	56	M	40-45	Cabin-Purser	Member	Married	Y	1 hour	1
P	57	M	45-50	Pilot	Executive	Married	Y	1 hour	1
P	58	F	4--45	Union / Researcher	Member	Married	Y	na	na

*Names withheld on request of participants

Appendix H: List of Abbreviations & Terms

AICCA	All India Cabin Crew Association
ALTP	Airline Transport Pilot License-Highest Level Of Aircraft Pilot Certificate.
ATC	Air Traffic Control
Bid	Flight attendants bid on monthly lines, vacations, and domiciles.
Block Time	The actual time an aircraft leaves the blocks and pushes back from the gate to the time it arrives (and is blocked in) at the gate at its destination
Boarding	The term used to describe the process of passengers getting on an aircraft, stowing their carry-on articles, and taking their assigned seats
CAPT	Cockpit Crew
CAR	Civil Aviation Requirements
CIC	Cabin In-Charge Crew
Dead-Head	The process of traveling on an aircraft as a passenger while on-duty (often in uniform)
DGCA	Directorate General of Civil Aviation
Door Arming	The procedure for preparing an aircraft door so that its associated escape slide will deploy upon opening.
Dreamliner	Boeing 787 Aircraft
ETA	Estimated Time of Arrival
ETD	Estimated Time of Departure
F/A Jump seat	A fold-down seat that is used by flight attendants during taxi, take-off, and turbulence.
F/O	First Officer
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FDTL	Flight Duty Time Limitations
Galley	The area inside an aircraft where meals and beverages are prepared by flight attendants.

ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICPA	Indian Commercial Pilots Association
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPG	Indian Pilots Guild
Layover	A period of time a crewmember is scheduled to remain at a specified location
Long Haul	Direct Long Range flights with FDTL of more than 12 hours
MEL	Minimum Equipment List
Narrow Body	An aircraft with a single isles with rows of seats on each side of the aisle
PIC	Pilot in Command
Report Sick	Taking sick leave immediately before a scheduled flight operation
Report Time	Time you are required to be at the airport for check-in.
RPK	Revenue Passenger Kilometre
Strike	Legal work stoppage by labour due to an inability to reach a labour agreement with management.
SUPY	Supernumerary
UNACC	Unaccompanied Minor
UTC	Universal Coordinated Time
Wide Body	An aircraft with two aisles with rows of seats in the centre of the two aisles and on each side.